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*From A. B. Mitchell*

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# THE KENSINGTON RUNE STONE.

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PRELIMINARY REPORT TO THE  
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY BY ITS MUSEUM COMMITTEE.

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PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY

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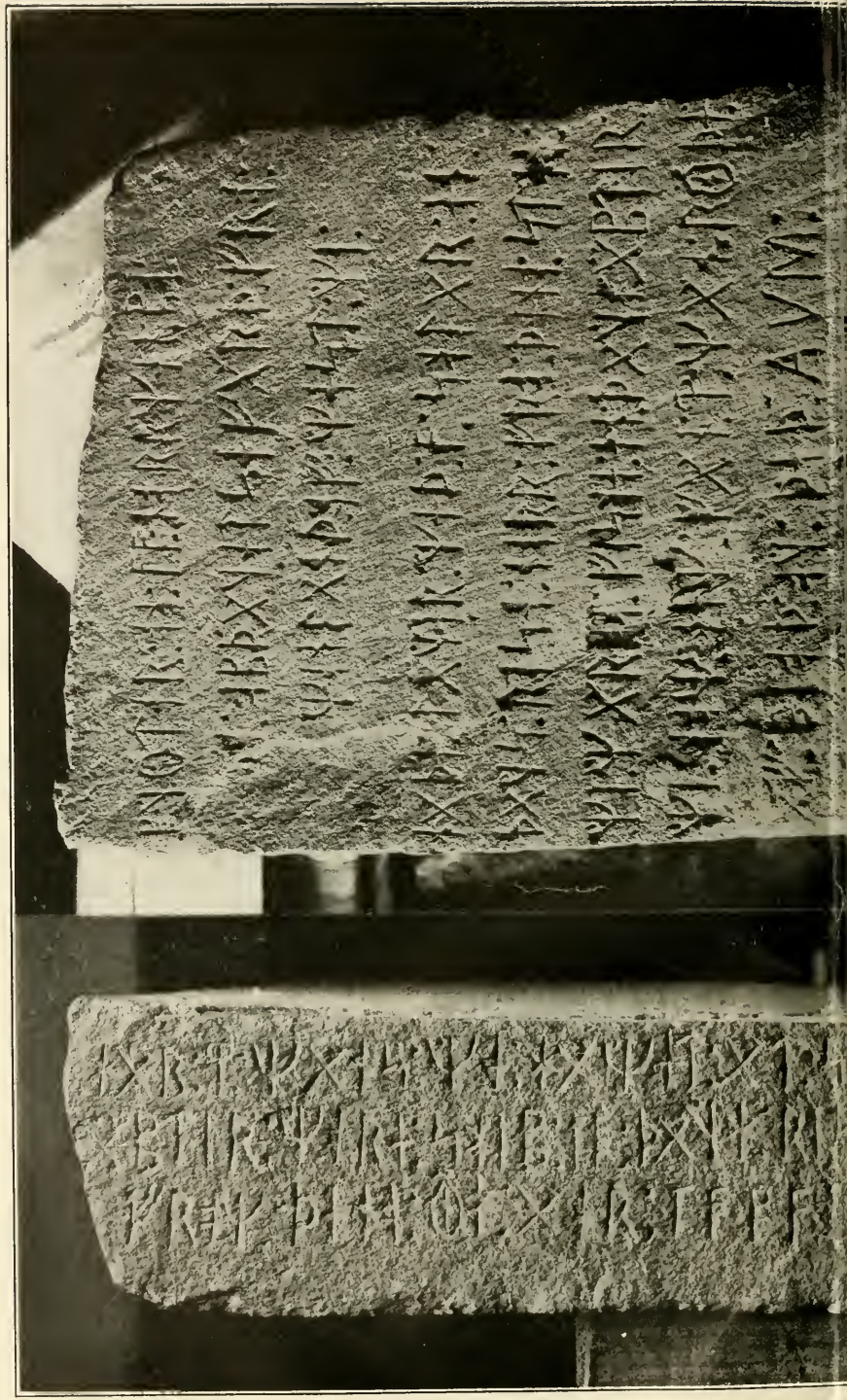
THE VOLKSZEITUNG COMPANY,  
ST. PAUL, MINN.  
DECEMBER, 1910.

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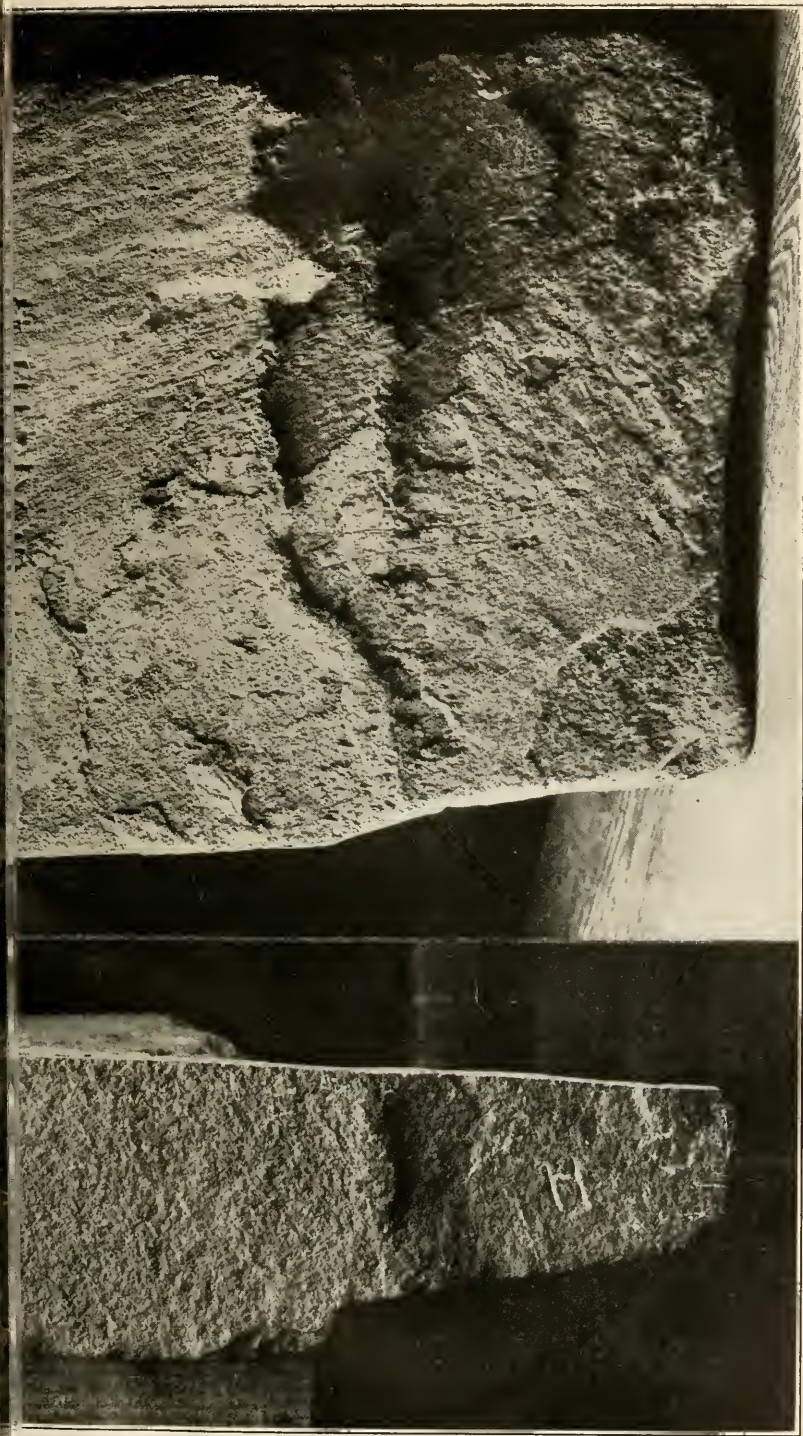










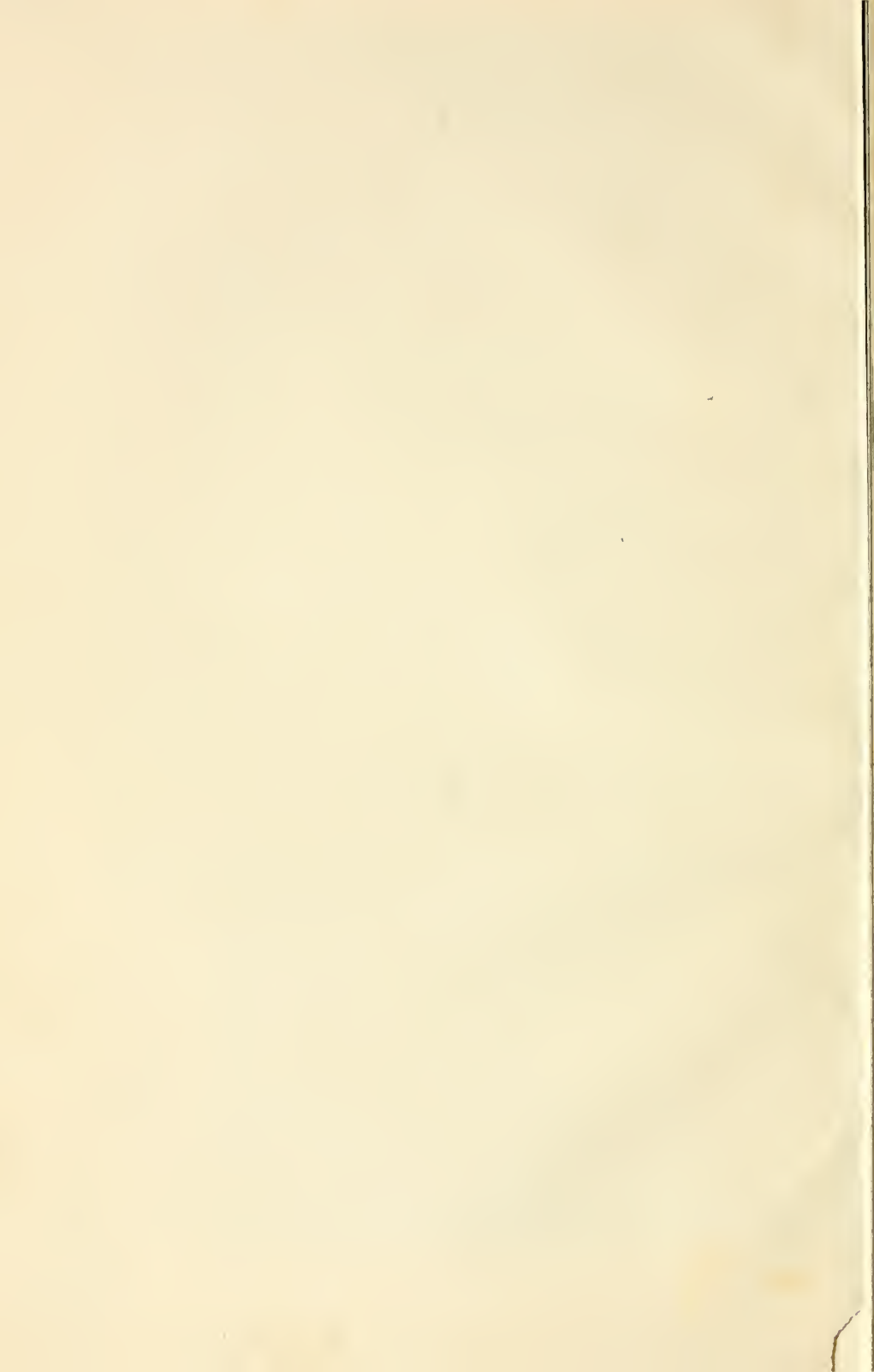


THE KENSINGTON RUNE STONE.

FACE VIEW.

EDGE VIEW.

Photographed for the Minnesota Historical Society by Adolph Donaldson, St. Paul, Minn.



# THE KENSINGTON RUNE STONE.

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PRELIMINARY REPORT TO THE  
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY BY ITS MUSEUM COMMITTEE.  
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PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY

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THE VOLKSZEITUNG COMPANY,  
ST. PAUL, MINN.  
DECEMBER, 1910.

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N. H. Winchell  
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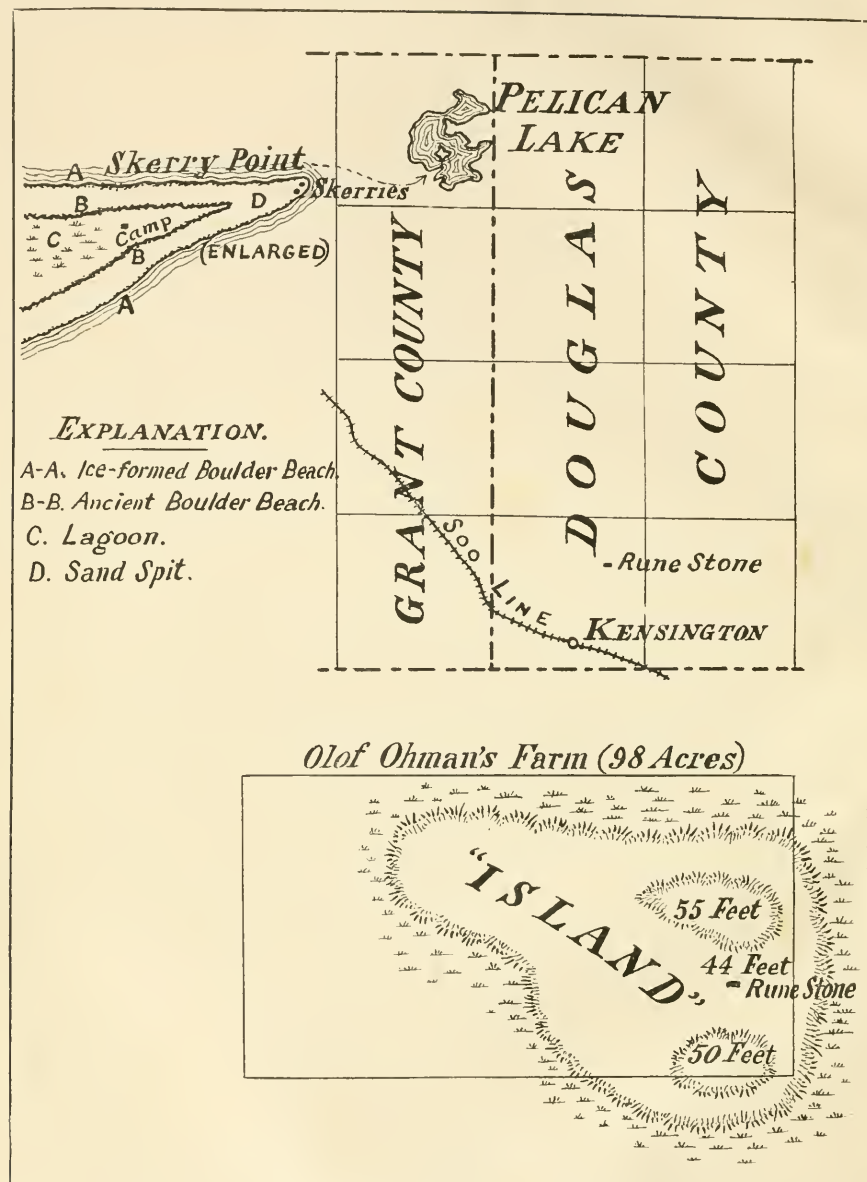
- Plate I. The Kensington Rune Stone, Edge View and Face View.
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MAP OF THE VICINITY OF KENSINGTON AND PELICAN LAKE, AND  
OF THE FARM WHERE THE RUNE STONE WAS FOUND.

## THE KENSINGTON RUNE STONE.

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PRELIMINARY REPORT TO THE MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
BY ITS MUSEUM COMMITTEE.

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As the Museum Committee is charged with the responsibility of making a recommendation to the Society respecting the authenticity or the fraudulent origin of the Kensington Rune Stone and its inscription, it is thought best to review somewhat carefully the facts as to the discovery of the stone. For this purpose the results of the three visits made to that locality by Prof. N. H. Winchell, investigating the subject for this Committee, will here be cast into one statement.

### THE DISCOVERY.

The stone was found on the farm of Mr. Olof Ohman on the southeast quarter of section 14, Solem township, Douglas county, about three miles northeast from Kensington station on the "Soo Line," on November 8, 1898. The owner of the farm was having a patch of land cleared of timber preparatory to plowing, and his men were grubbing out the stumps. There were present at the finding, or immediately thereafter, the following persons: Olof Ohman, his sons, Olof Emil Ohman, 12 years of age, and Edward Ohman, 10 years of age, and Nils Olof Flaaten, owner of the adjoining farm.

The exact location was on the southern slope of one of two knolls which together form the higher part of what has been called an "island," because formerly surrounded by a lake and now surrounded by a grassy marsh. These knolls have an extreme height, above the surface of the marsh, of fifty-five feet, the smaller knoll rising about fifty feet. The stone lay forty-four feet above the marsh. (See the map, Plate II.)

When the stone was found, its inscribed side was down, and about six inches of soil covered it. A poplar or aspen tree

grew above it, and spread its principal roots about it, running into the ground on opposite sides. On being cut away the stump carrying the roots lay adjacent for some weeks and was seen and noted by several visitors. Estimates as to the size and age of the tree vary somewhat, some stating that it was at least ten years old and others that it was from twenty to thirty years old, and one estimating it as probably forty years old. According to Mr. Sam Olson, of Kensington, this tree was about four or five inches in diameter at about fifteen inches above the stone, and about ten inches in diameter at six or eight inches above the stone. The roots of the tree, especially the largest one which spread over the surface of the stone, were flattened by contact with the stone during the period of their growth. The flattening of the roots is an important feature, as it denotes that the tree had been in contact with the stone during the whole time of the life of the tree.

In the spring subsequent to the finding of the stone Mr. Samuel Olson and a party visited the place and made some excavations where the stone was found, having the idea that the men who were massacred had been buried there, and that the stone was designed to mark their burial place. He saw, and all his party saw, the stump of the tree that grew on the stone. The members of this party, besides Mr. Olson, were the following: Cleve Van Dyke, executive clerk to the late Governor Johnson, then superintendent of schools of Douglas county; J. P. Hedberg, now at Warroad; John M. Olson, who furnished a team, now at Alexandria; Albert Larson, now in Canada; John E. Johnson, of Kensington; Emil Johnson, now at Warroad; Gulick Landsvark, living two miles east of Kensington; and Lars Coldberg, now at Bowbells, N. D.

Mr. Samuel Olson and Mr. John E. Johnson signed a joint statement that the tree must have been at least ten years old, and more likely twenty or thirty years old. The rest of the party have not been consulted,\* but Mr. Joseph Hotvedt

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\*Letters were written later to each of those named. Answers were received from several of the party, all of them confirming the description of Mr. Olson. Letters to others were not answered, or were returned unopened.



stated that he saw the roots and verified the description of their flatness, "such as would be caused by lying against a stone."

Mr. Olson made a drawing to show the appearance of this stump when in contact with the stone. He thinks the largest root ran over and across the stone, but Mr. Olof Ohman was positive that the largest root ran down into the ground at the edge of the stone, and that a smaller root ran across the upper face of the stone. This smaller root he thought was about three inches in diameter.

For the purpose of ocular illustration Mr. Holand later procured on the spot from Mr. Ohman four sections cut across some poplar trees growing on Mr. Ohman's farm, viz., sections shown in Plates III and IV, marked *a*, *b*, *c*, *d*. The certificates of Olof Ohman and of his son Edward, as well as of Mr. Samuel Olson, are given also. The annual rings of growth on these sections can be counted as follows: On *a*, 37 annual rings; on *b*, 42 annual rings; on *c*, 38 annual rings; on *d*, 31 annual rings. From three to five years should be added for the decayed centers.

According to Mr. Ohman the tree had the appearance and rough bark of a stunted growth, illustrated by sections *c* and *d*, on which are about as many growth rings as on the larger sections *a* and *b*. If these sections *a* and *b* fairly represent the size of the tree, and if it still had an annual growth illustrated by *c* and *d*, which certainly were from stunted trees, the age of the tree was probably nearer fifty years than ten years.

*Statement of Olof Ohman.*

[Translation.]

Kensington, Minn., July 16, 1910.

The sections *a*, *b*, *c*, *d*, were all cut on my property in the vicinity of where the rune stone was found, under the same timber conditions. The section *a* is of the same size as the tree which grew over the stone; but both *a* and *b* are from much more luxuriant trees than that which stood over the stone. Sections *c* and *d* are from a tree which in its growth is more comparable with the rune stone tree, but are about three inches less in diameter than that.

OLOF OHMAN.

*Statement of Edward Ohman.*

July 16, 1910.

The section marked *a* is of exactly the same size, as far as I can remember, as the tree under which the rune stone was found.

EDWARD OHMAN.

*Statement of Samuel Olson.*

Kensington, Minn., July 18, 1910.

Having seen the four sections cut by Olof Ohman to show the size of the tree under which the rune stone was found, my impression is that the rune stone tree at its base was a little longer in its oval diameter than section *b*, and that it tapered so as to have about 18 inches above the base a diameter a little larger than section *c*.

S. OLSON.

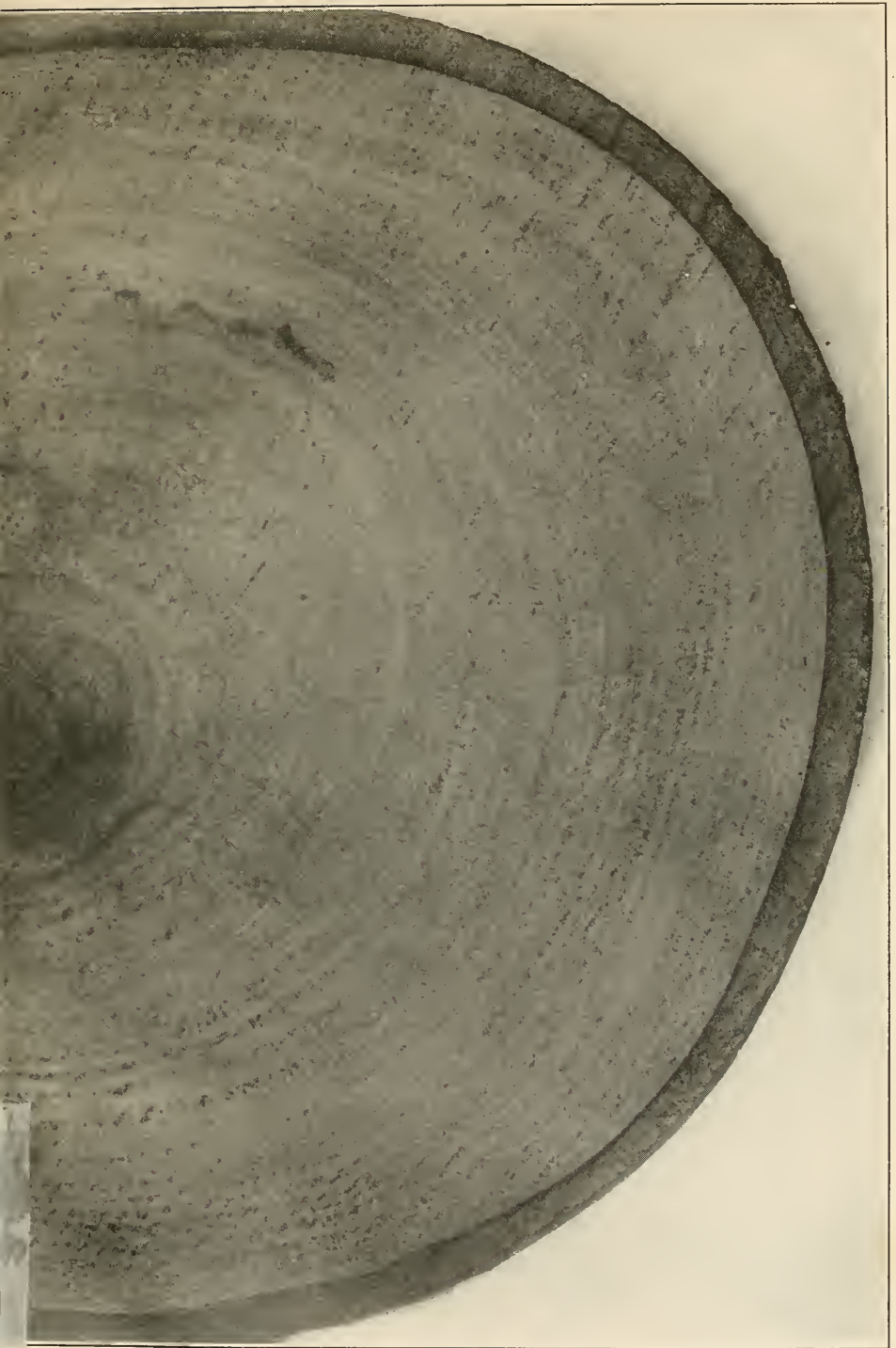
It should be stated here that Professor Flom's account of his interview with Mr. Olson carries a misapprehension of what Mr. Olson said as to the size of the tree. Mr. Olson says that he said that the tree tapered so that at 15 or 18 inches above the stone it was about four or five inches in diameter.

The topography of Mr. Ohman's farm and the adjoining country is morainic, the elevations rising sometimes somewhat abruptly to the height of fifty or seventy-five feet, or even a hundred feet, above the adjoining lowlands. The material of the drift is clay of a limonitic yellow color, but at a depth of fifteen to twenty feet this clay is blue. There are very few boulders in the clay, yet on the tops of some of the drift hills granitic and other boulders are numerous, and sometimes they are found in numbers near the bases of the hills and in the swamps. They are sometimes large and conspicuous, and frequently have been gathered into heaps in the fields. About seventy-five in a hundred of the boulders are of granite; about five in a hundred are of limestone; about five in a hundred are of gabbro or of gabbroid rocks; five in a hundred are of Keewatin greenstone, including Ogishke conglomerate; about five in a hundred are of dark nondescript rock, sometimes quartzose; and the other five in a hundred may be compared with the rock of the rune stone, being some of the various forms of graywacke.





SECTIONS OF POPLAR TREES, SHOWING THE EST  
SECTION A.



SIZE AND AGE OF THE TREE GROWING ABOVE THE RUNE STONE.  
SECTION B.





The extreme length of the Rune Stone is 36 inches, the width across the face 15 inches, the thickness  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches, and its weight is about 230 pounds. It is of graywacke, but its shape and dark color suggest that it is trap. Its flat surfaces and angular jointage are due apparently to long continued heating and slow cooling in contact, or near contact, with igneous rocks. On its inscribed face is a layer of calcite covering a part of the area in which the inscription was engraved. This calcite was deposited in a jointage-opening, probably when the rock was in its native place; and it has been revealed by the removal of an adjoining parallel mass, the joint plane itself causing the even face on which the engraving was made. The reverse of the inscribed side is not so regular and has evidently been through the rough experiences of glacial action, since it bears a number of distinct glacial striae.

The men who found the stone are plain and simple farmers, working hard to derive a subsistence for themselves and families from their land. The honesty and candor of Mr. Olof Ohman become evident to anyone who converses with him.\* He does not speak English readily, but seems to understand English when he hears it spoken in common conversation. He states that his education comprised six terms of school in Sweden, of six weeks each, in an elementary country school, where the children gathered for instruction, first at one farm house for a week and then at another, six weeks in all making one term. I was told that Mr. Ohman came to his farm in 1890, and on consulting the register of deeds at Alexandria I found lands deeded at four different dates, now constituting the Ohman farm, from 1890 to 1898, from Halvor Stenson, Ole Amundson, and E. J. Moen.

After finding the stone, it was exhibited for a time in the drug store at Kensington. It was later sent to Minneapolis and was examined by Prof. O. J. Breda, also to Evanston, Ill., and was examined by Prof. George O. Curme. As they pronounced it fraudulent, it was returned to the finder in March,

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\*Not one of all who have interviewed Mr. Ohman, whether believers or non-believers in the authenticity of the inscription, has seen any reason to question his veracity.

1899, who placed it carelessly in his yard, where it served as a stepping stone near his granary for eight years, without further notice. In 1907 Mr. Hjalmar Rued Holand obtained it of Mr. Ohman, and has brought it again to notice and wider study. By Mr. Holand it was brought to the attention of the Minnesota Historical Society; and the Museum Committee was directed to investigate its authentic or fraudulent record, and to report their recommendation to the Executive Council. Mr. Holand has since exhibited it in Chicago, Ill., Madison, Wis., and Northfield, Minn., giving in each place a lecture. This has brought out various criticisms, *pro* and *con*, and the burden resting on the committee has considerably increased.

The members of this committee appreciate the great importance of the question which is in their hands, and they know, collectively and individually, that it is due to American history, before they stamp the stone with their approval or their rejection, to make an exhaustive investigation and an impartial discussion of all the circumstances.

#### THE INSCRIPTION.

The runic inscription, shown by Plate I, has been translated as below and published by Mr. Holand in Harper's Weekly, October 9, 1909.

On the face of the stone:

8 göter ok 22 norrmen po opdhagelse fardh fro Vinland of  
vest vi hadhe laeger vedh 2 skjar en dags rise norr fro dhen  
sten vi var ok fiske en dhagh aeptir vi kom hem fan 10 man  
rödhe af blodh og dhedh A V M fraelse af illy

On the edge of the stone:

har 10 mans ve(d) havet at se aeptir vore skip 14 [?] dhagh  
rise from dhen oö ahr 1362

No one has called in question the correctness of this translation. In explanation of the transliteration Mr. Holand writes: "The runic alphabet had only one character, þ, to indicate three, or what became three, different sounds, *th*, *dh*, and *d*. Out of 2,000 runic inscriptions we find only about a half dozen having a separate sign, ʀ, for *d*. This character, þ, was later supplemented by ð, which was used medially and

finally. This however was used only in the literature written in Roman characters, and was never used in runic inscriptions. In most cases this þ has now been superseded by *d*, but there is reason to believe that in the fourteenth century it had a soft sound. I have therefore translated it with *dh*."

The English translation is as follows:

"Eight Goths [Swedes] and twenty-two Norwegians upon a journey of discovery from Vinland westward. We had a camp by two skerries one day's journey north from this stone. We were out fishing one day. When we returned home we found ten men red with blood and dead. A V M [Ave, Virgo Maria], save us from evil.

[We] have ten men by the sea to look after our vessel fourteen [or forty-one?] days' journey from this island. Year 1362."

#### REFERENCES TO THE TOPOGRAPHY OF THE REGION.

There are two or three references to natural objects to which we should give special attention:

(a) Their camp was near two rocks in the water (skerries), one day's journey north from the stone;

(b) The location of the stone was on an island;

(c) The sea was fourteen days' journey from the stone (doubtfully forty-one).

(a) Professor Fossum and Mr. Holand searched about lake Christina, Pelican lake, and other lakes, lying about one day's journey (twenty miles) toward the north. The former found no rocks about the shores which could be accepted as the rocks mentioned in the inscription. Mr. Holand, guided by Rev. O. A. Norman of Ashby, found several large boulders standing in the water about 300 or 400 feet from a sharp point on the southwest shore of Pelican lake, which seemed to him to answer the description. There are twelve or thirteen of them and hence they are too numerous, and for the purpose of locating a camping-place they would hardly be referred to, and certainly would not be at all in accord with the number "two." Mr. Norman remarked, on occasion of a late interview, that the term "skerry" is applicable to one rock or a series of rocks, and that there are two lines or series of boulders which run

not exactly parallel, and that those lines might be called the skerries referred to in the inscription; but such lines are not distinguishable from the land.

There are, however, on the point itself, at the water's edge and at the extremity of the point, two enormous boulders. One is of red porphyritic granite, cut by a coarser red dike, three inches wide, with dimensions of 6 feet by 4 feet by  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet, with rounded contours. The other is of gray gneiss, banded with light reddish laminae, 6 feet by  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet by 4 feet, irregularly and bluntly angular, showing some brecciation and a pegmatyte vein about an inch wide. These boulders are in the most exposed position, and are very conspicuous objects to anyone standing on the land a few rods farther back. Some small boulders and sand form the immediate breakwater of the beach, and also compose the point itself for some distance inland from the boulders.

This part of the point is liable to destruction by ice and by waves and winds of every season. That it is transitory is proved by the fact that the roots of a small oak are uncovered to the height of fourteen inches above the present surface, and this oak must have started to grow when the surface on which it sprouted was so much higher than now. Under such conditions, at times when the adjoining beach may have been washed away, the large boulders would be surrounded by water. It is also very certain that 548 years ago the lake level was somewhat higher than it is now, and that circumstance alone, without the removal of the stones and sand lying now about the big boulders, would have brought these stones into the water, and would give them exactly the characters required to comply with the inscription. The present beach line is paralleled, on either side of the point, by a higher beach composed of boulders, gravel, and sand, which could have been formed only when the lake was about two feet higher than now. This upper beach fades away into the mainland of the point, but between its arms embraces a small lagoon. If the explorers' camp was on this point, near its extremity, the two big boulders would be chosen very naturally as reference points in the inscription.

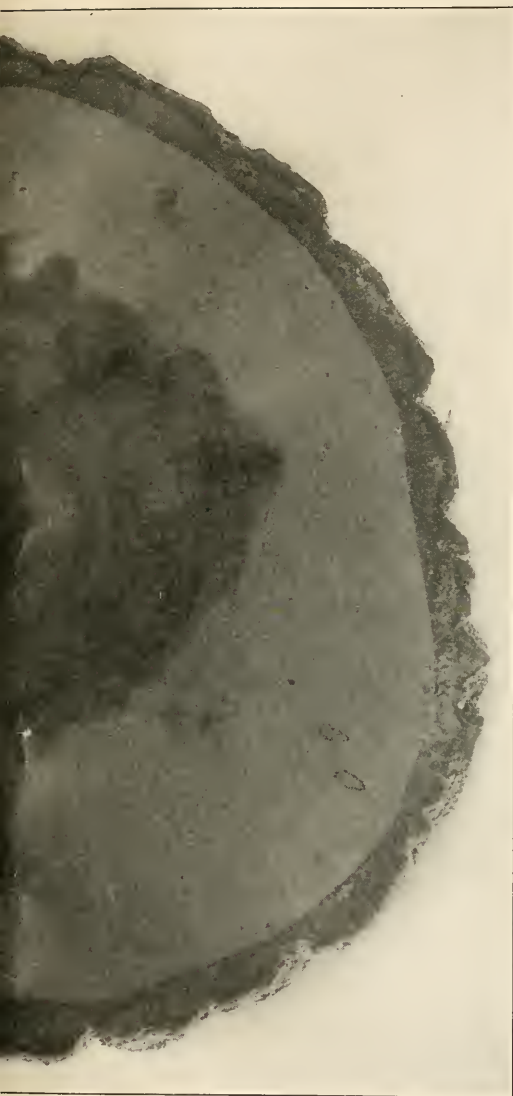






SECTIONS OF POPLAR TREES OF  
THE TREE GROWING AT  
SECTION C.

PLATE IV.



UNTED GROWTH, SIMILAR TO  
THE RUNE STONE.

SECTION D.



(b) The stone is said to have been located on an island, but when found it was not on an island. It was on a morainic hill which is now surrounded by a grassy marsh, and which may have been an island in a small lake prior to the desiccation of the country which has converted many lakes into marshes and many marshes into meadows. This gradual drying up of the country is a well-known feature throughout the western part of the state. It has been known and many times noted during the last fifty years throughout the Northwest. If the stone be genuine, therefore, the present disagreement with the facts, as with the skerries, is due to physical change in the surface of the country.

(c) The stone was fourteen days' journey from the sea. At no place could the sea be reached in that space of time, with their means of travel, other than Hudson bay. There is some doubt whether this figure should be 14 or 41, and if it be 41 it would allow the supposition that the party penetrated the country by way of the Great Lakes. There are, however, insuperable objections to such an idea. It is a very improbable suggestion that from any place which may have had the name of Vinland a party would penetrate North America by that route, by sail and by foot, to encounter the natives in a tragic death only in western Minnesota. That suggestion need not be further considered; and the more so, since the route of possible travel, or at least most probable, as shown by the accompanying map (Plate V) of the regions north to Hudson bay and of the proximity of Minnesota through a well known water route, would have been from Vinland to Hudson bay, and to lake Winnipeg via Nelson river, and thence up the Red river of the North. This map is based on the chart of J. T. Smith, published in 1839 at London, in a work entitled "The Discovery of America by the Northmen in the Tenth Century." By this map it appears that the entrance to Hudson bay is directly west from Westbygd and Eastbygd, the chief settlements of Greenland, and could hardly fail of being well known. It is the route which the ships of the Hudson Bay Company followed for about

three hundred years in reaching the region of furs tributary to Hudson bay.

#### WHERE WAS VINLAND?

It will be noted that, according to Smith's map, Vinland was eastern Massachusetts; and it is customary, in writings dealing with the Northmen's discoveries, to mention three parts of the coast of North America, namely, Helluland, Markland, and Vinland, the last being farthest south. But that there was confusion in the application of these geographic terms there seems no room to question. It seems to be a mere assumption that Helluland was north of Markland, for it is sometimes said to be northeast of Greenland, and even to be duplicated, one to the northeast and one to the southwest, while Rafn has placed one at Labrador and one at Newfoundland. This last made it reasonable to place Vinland much further south (Nova Scotia).

That Vinland was not exclusively Nova Scotia, but still less exclusively Massachusetts, is evident from Joseph Fischer's work, "The Discoveries of the Norsemen in America" (St. Louis, 1903), at page 3, when, in quoting from Adam of Bremen's oldest work, Fischer states that the objections to Adam's tales consisted mainly in a statement like the following:

"After Wineland there is no habitable land in that ocean, but all that emerges is icebound and wrapped in impenetrable mist."

Adam was the earliest, according to Fischer, who called attention to the arctic and North American discoveries of the Northmen, having written in A. D. 1067. Perhaps the objection to Adam's account of Vinland was based by Fischer on an idea of Vinland which grew up afterward without sufficient warrant, and it is necessary to inquire to what land Adam's original description was intended to be applied. It could not apply to the region south of Labrador, but it is applicable to the country north and west, i. e., adjoining Hudson strait and extending into Hudson bay; and it seems to indicate that from the first the Northmen knew something of the ruggedness and inhospitable nature of at least the northern part of Hudson bay. It is perhaps reasonable to presume that at the



first the term Vinland was applied to the whole known coast of North America, and that it was only at a later epoch that it was localized and restricted to Nova Scotia or to Massachusetts. But that would discredit the story of the discovery of grapes by the enthusiastic German, unless it can be shown that grapes grew spontaneously as far north as Labrador.

NOTE.—Since the foregoing was written, the important researches of Prof. M. L. Fernald on the "Plants of Wineland the Good" have been printed (Rhodora, February, 1910), which show conclusively that the "grapes" referred to by the translators of the sagas, were not the fruit of the grape vine (*Vitis*), but some form of currant (*Ribes*), or the wine-berry of northern Europe (*Vaccinium Vitis-Idaea*), and that the last named species is common in northern Labrador. As the so-called "grapes" were gathered so abundantly as to fill their after-boat in the spring of the year, it seems certain that the fruit so gathered was that which is now well known as wine-berry (*Vaccinium Vitis-Idaea*), which is so abundant in the spring as to constitute the food supply for birds when they return from the south. Professor Fernald also shows that the "self-planted wheat," mentioned as one of the products of Vinland, was the strand wheat (*Elymus arenarius*), having a similar northern distribution. The tree which the Norsemen procured in Vinland, as identified by Fernald, was not maple, but some form of curly birch, probably the canoe birch (*Betula papyracea*). These researches not only confirm the description of Adam of Bremen, but render it probable that the people of Vinland were acquainted with more or less of Hudson bay.

It is well known that students of Norse records have found difficulty in reconciling the statements respecting Vinland, not only as to the name of the discoverer, but as to the nature of the country and its products. It occurs to this Committee that possibly these discrepancies can be reconciled by the supposition that two different eastward-facing coasts have been confounded and considered as one. The earliest accounts are perfectly applicable to the west coast of Hudson bay. The Flatey book states that in Vinland were glaciers, and these are well known about the northwestern confines of Hudson Bay, but are

not found in Nova Scotia nor in Massachusetts, and only scantily in Labrador. The description by Adam of Bremen, and the earlier dates given by the Flatey book, giving Bjarne as the discoverer of Vinland, seem to point to the west coast of Hudson bay. After the lapse of about fifteen years (985 to 1000) Leif's accidental voyage to Vinland took place, and there is reason to suppose that he and his successors visited points on the Atlantic side of North America, but supposed they had visited the country which had already been named Vinland. From his and Karlsefne's sagas, there rose the geographic distinctions of Helluland, Markland, and Vinland, so much spoken of by all later accounts. The Committee has not taken the time necessary to verify or to disprove this hypothesis, and desires merely to call attention to it as a possible solution of contradictions that appear in the historic records, avoiding the necessity of rejecting either as untrustworthy.

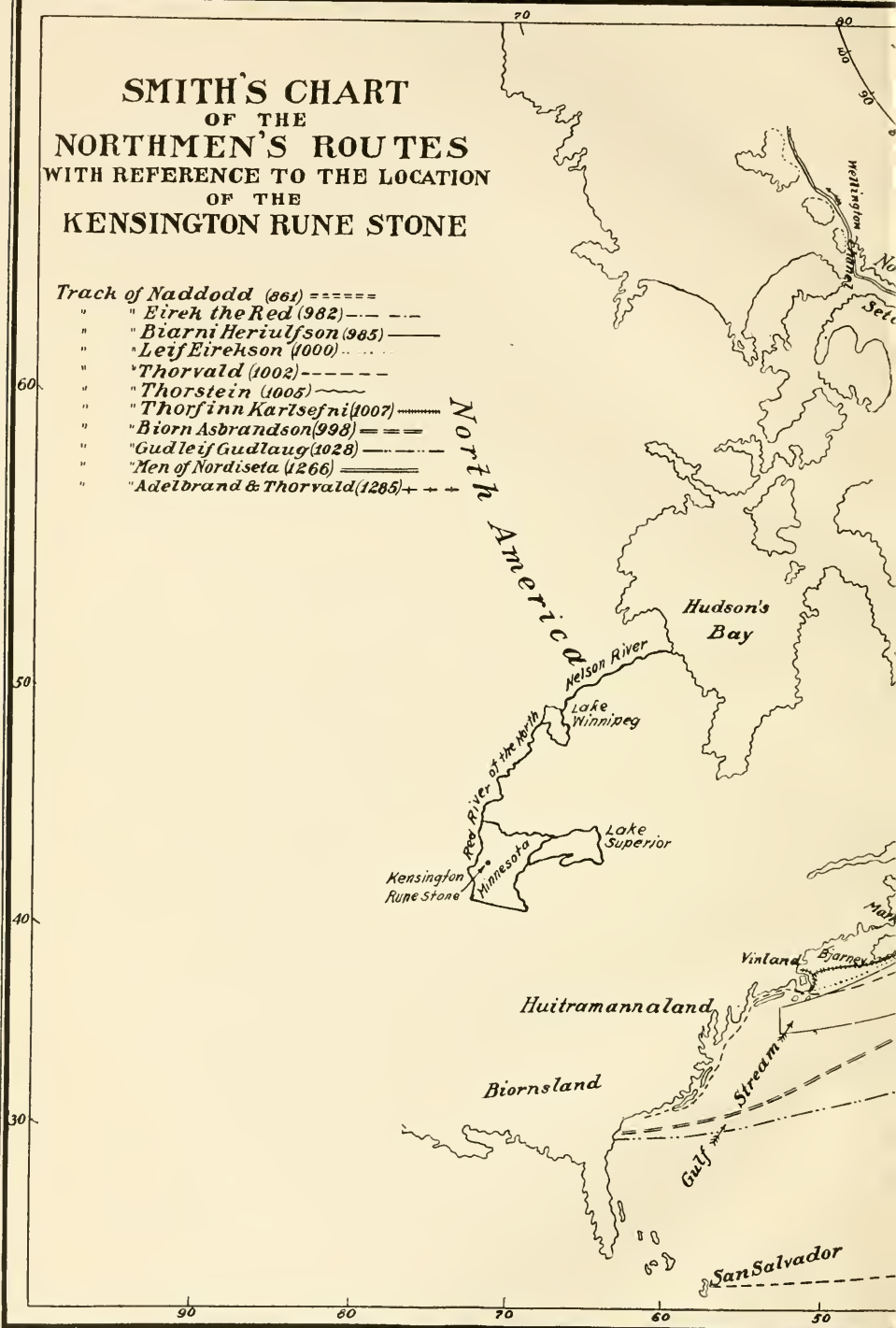
Dr. Henrik Nissen, of Minneapolis, has called attention to "characters" described as engraved on the rocks of the shore of Hudson bay, not far from Fort George, and suggests that they may be runes made by the Norsemen.

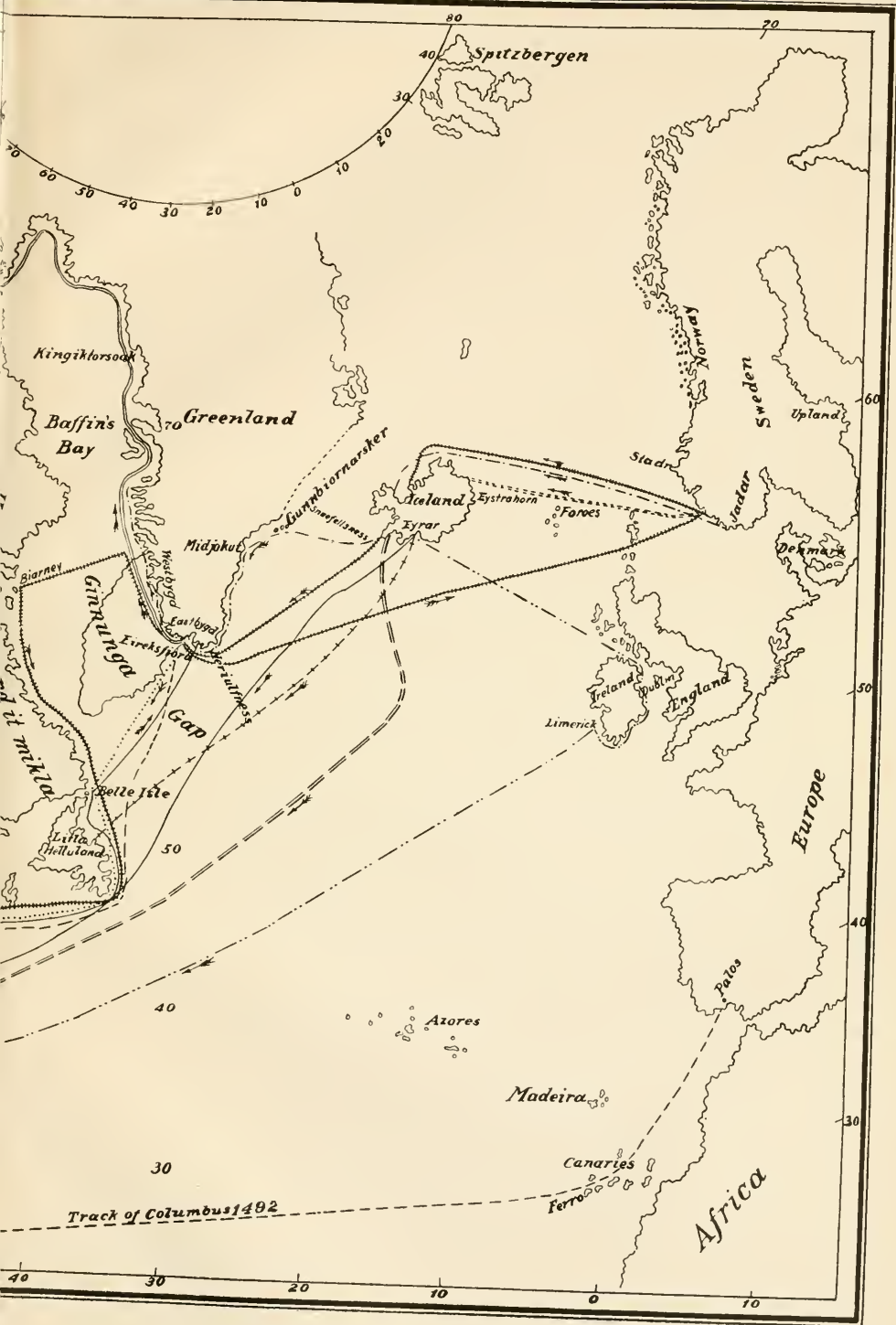
There certainly was no permanent colonization of Vinland, and according to Fischer all arguments hitherto brought forward to support the idea of colonization by the Norse have proved to be fallacious. The definite history of the voyages to Vinland ends at A. D. 1121, but there is sufficient account to show that until the year 1362 voyages from the Scandinavian settlements in Western Greenland were occasionally made to Vinland. The western settlement in Greenland was about that time attacked by Eskimo and destroyed, and probably within a half century later the eastern settlement suffered a similar stroke. The year A. D. 1406 is the last date given in the Icelandic annals for the arrival of a foreign vessel in Greenland. A colony in Vinland, if it existed, therefore must have perished about the same time as the destruction of the Greenland colonies. In the absence of other evidence, the statement of the Kensington Rune Stone, that a party of thirty men started from Vinland on an exploring tour westward, may be understood to refer merely to a winter spent by the party in Vin-

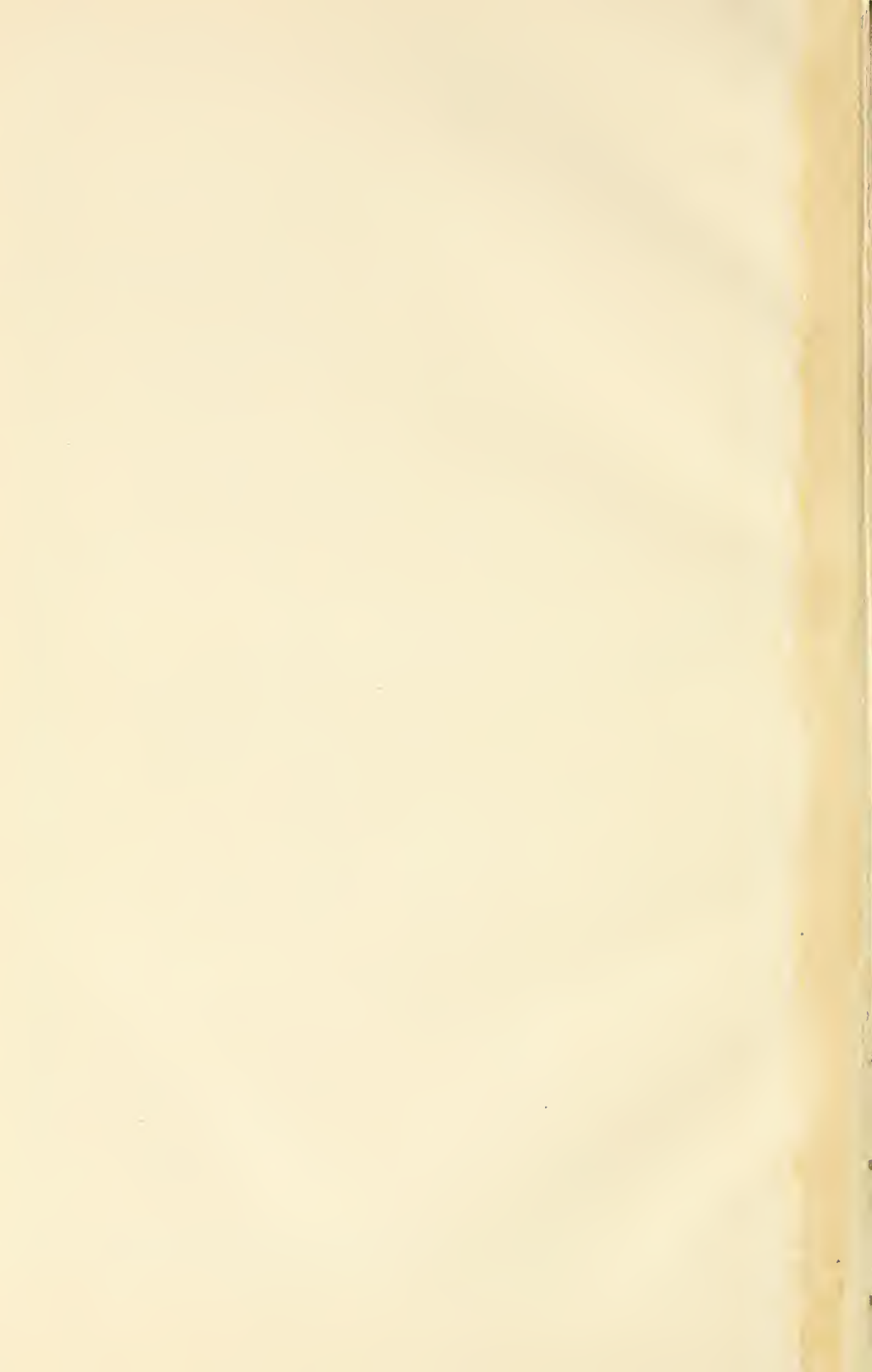


# SMITH'S CHART OF THE NORTHMEN'S ROUTES WITH REFERENCE TO THE LOCATION OF THE KENSINGTON RUNE STONE

- Track of Naddodd (861) =====  
 " " Eirik the Red (982) ----  
 " " Biarni Heriulfson (985) ———  
 " " Leif Eirikson (1000) .....  
 " " Thorvald (1002) -----  
 " " Thorstein (1005) ~~~~~  
 " " Thorfinn Karlsefni (1007) .....  
 " " Biorn Asbrandson (998) ====  
 " " Gudleif Gudlaug (1028) ----  
 " " Men of Nordiseta (1266) =====  
 " " Adelbrand & Thorvald (1285) + + +









land, or even to a temporary landing there, rather than to any previously existing settlement or colony.

According to Storm's "*Studier over Vinlandsreiserne*" (pages 76, 77), an expedition was sent by King Magnus from Bergen in 1355, under the command of Paul Knutson, into American waters, the purpose of which was to defend the Greenland settlements against the Eskimo. It has been supposed that this expedition, or a part of it, returned in 1364.

#### THE SLIGHT WEATHERING OF THE RUNE STONE.

It may be assumed that, if this stone was erected, as it claims, by explorers in 1362, it was set up on end, and that the lower end, where no runes are engraved, was buried in the ground. When it was found, according to the testimony of Mr. Ohman, its inscribed face was downward. Now the lower end of the stone is not cut off squarely, but is roughly beveled on one side. Gravitation alone acting on a beveled stone would cause the base to be diverted to one side, in the same manner as a single-beveled stake when driven into the ground. In settling into the ground, owing to the direction of the bevel, this stone naturally would fall with its face side upward. Its position therefore was determined by some other force than gravitation. Either it was purposely placed with the rune inscription down, which is not reasonable to suppose, whatever its age, or it was acted on by some other force which caused it to fall over forward. We cannot of course state how many forests have grown and been thrown down by tornadoes within the 548 years through which it may have been in the spot; nor how many forest fires have devastated the region; nor how many buffaloes have rubbed against it; nor, finally, to what acts of violence the native Indians may have resorted to counteract its evil influences. Numerous works of the mound-building Indians are known in the immediate neighborhood, and they certainly would have discovered the monument. If they participated in the massacre of the ten men at the camp, they would quite certainly look upon the stone as a retributive threatening reminder of their pale-face victims.

The interior of the stone is dark or dark gray. On close inspection it can be seen to contain many grains of quartz which are roundish, showing a sedimentary detrital origin. In a thin-section, prepared for microscopic examination, it shows not only rounded quartz grains but also feldspar grains, and a finer matrix consisting chiefly of quartz and biotite. The dark color of the stone is due to much biotite, mainly, but also to an isotropic green mineral (chlorite?), magnetite, and hematite. The quartz has become mainly re-formed by secondary growths. There is a crypto-gneissic elongation prevalent in the mica, and also to some extent in the larger quartzes.

The weathered surface is somewhat lighter, and yet it is firm and wholly intact. It is evident that the surface color has been acquired since the Glacial period, and therefore that some 7,000 or 8,000 years may have elapsed since its face was first exposed to the elements. The reverse of the inscribed side is more altered by weathering and carries evident older glacial striations.

The first impression derived from the inscription is that it is of recent date, and not 548 years old. The edges and angles of the chiseling are sharp, and show no apparent alteration by weathering. The powder of the stone when crushed is nearly white. None of this powder is preserved in the runes on the face of the stone, and it is necessary therefore to allow it some years of age, but it is quite impossible to draw a decisive inference of the age of the inscription from that alone. The edge of the stone differs in this respect from the face, since most of the rune letters show the white powder formed by crushing the stone. This difference was said to be due to the fact that the runes on the edge had been filled with mud and had been cleaned out by scraping them with an iron nail. Indeed in the runes in some places on the edge can be seen with a pocket magnifier small quantities of fresh metallic iron evidently derived from that process.

The freedom of the face of the stone from glacial marking is to be noted. It seems probable that the smooth jointage surface on which the inscription is made was of more recent date than 7,000 or 8,000 years. It is plain that the calcite deposit

that covers a part of it was formed in a joint-opening before the stone was separated from its neighbor, and that it has had approximately as long direct exposure to the elements as the rest of that surface. The well preserved condition of this calcite, as a whole, no less than the non-glaciation of the face of the stone, indicates a period of exposure less than 7,000 or 8,000 years. Marble slabs in graveyards in New England are more deeply disintegrated than this calcite, when they stand above the surface of the ground.

The immediate surface of the calcite, especially the edges formed by cutting the runes, is smoothed by a recent friction of some kind, much more than the surface of the graywacke; and this is attributable to wearing away when the stone served as a stepping-stone at the granary.

If the engraved face of this stone was separated from its neighbor since the Glacial age, as seems certain, it must have been in some way protected from the action of the elements; and consequently the calcite is comparable with the white, fine-grained limestone boulders and pebbles that are common in the body of the drift in that part of the state. Such boulders when freshly taken from the till in deep excavations are not rotted, but are fresh and firm and smooth as marbles, and show distinctly the fine glacial scratches which they received during the Ice age, which ended about 7,000 or 8,000 years ago. When, however, they are found exposed at the surface of the ground, they have lost this smoothness and all the glacial marking, and their surfaces afford a fine white powder of natural disintegration. As there is nothing of this on this calcite (which is also the principal ingredient of the limestone boulders), it is evident that either the calcite has but recently been exposed or has been protected from the weather. If the slab was separated from its neighbor 548 years ago, it must have lain with its face side down during the most of that period, and if separated earlier it must have been covered by drift clay. If it was so separated fifteen or thirty years ago, it may have lain with its face side up and probably would show no more weathering than it now evinces. In short, there is no possible natural way to preserve that calcite scale from general disintegration for 548

years except to bury it beneath the surface. If it were not thus buried and still is intact, it must have been exposed and the inscription must have been made less than a hundred years ago, and probably less than thirty years ago.

The general "mellow" color of the face of the graywacke, and of the whole surface of the stone, is also to be noted. This is the first apparent effect of weathering. Graywacke may be estimated to be fifty to a hundred times more durable in the weather than calcite, some graywackes being more resistant than others.

There are six stages of the weathering of graywacke which are exhibited by the stone, and they may be arranged approximately in a scale as follows:

1.	A fresh break or cut	- - - - -	0
2.	Break or cut shown by the runes of the face	-	5
3.	Edge-face, which has not been engraved, but was apparently dressed by a rough bush-hammering		5
4.	The inscribed face of the stone	- - -	10
5.	The finely glaciated and polished back side and the non-hammered portion of the edge	- -	30
6.	The coarse gouging and the general beveling and deepest weathering of the back side	- -	250 or 500

These figures are but rough estimates and are intended to express the grand epochs of time through which the stone has passed since it started from the solid rock of which it formed a part prior to the Glacial period; and to a certain degree they are subject to the errors of the personal equation of the person who gives them. Prof. W. O. Hotchkiss, state geologist of Wisconsin, estimated that the time since the runes were inscribed is "at least 50 to 100 years." If the figures in the foregoing series be all multiplied by 100, they would stand:

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
000:	500:	500:	1,000:	8,000:	25,000 or 50,000

Since 8,000 years is approximately the date of the end of the latest glaciation (5), the numbers may all be accepted as the approximate number of years required for the various stages

of weathering. Hence stages (2) and (3) may have required each about 500 years.

The composition of the stone makes it one of the most durable in nature, equalling granite, and almost equalling the dense quartzite of the pipestone quarry in the southwestern part of Minnesota. On the surface of this quartzite, even where exposed to the weather since they were formed, the fine glacial scratches and polishing are well preserved, and when covered by drift clay they seem not to have been changed at all.

#### DISCUSSION OF THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE RUNE RECORD.

Owing to the existence of the belief with some that the inscription was made by Mr. Ohman, and the rumors that seemed to confirm that suspicion, a member of the Committee has made three separate visits to the locality, and has examined into all the facts that have a bearing on such supposed origin of the stone. There is no need to rehearse the details of this search. A summary review, however, seems to be called for in order that the result reached by the Committee may be seen to be based on a thorough investigation.

There was a rumor that a man of the name of Ohman had taken part, about fifteen years ago, in the exploitation of a so-called "fossil man" found in Marshall county, in the Red river valley. As the owners of this wonderful specimen disagreed and went into court to settle their dispute, the facts were made a matter of record. On consulting Judges Andrew Grindeland, of Warren, and William Watts, of Crookston, it was found that one of the parties was named O'Brien, and that his name had been confounded with Ohman.

It was rumored that Mr. Ohman had rune books, was familiar with rune characters, made runes on the sidewalk, on window casings and granaries, and was generally regarded as a "queer genius," resembling Uriah Heap, of Dickens. These rumors came to the committee in letters from different directions, and on occasion of the third trip to Douglas county were met with not only at Kensington, but also at Elbow Lake, at Brandon, Evansville, Moe, and sometimes at intervening farmhouses. In order to find the truth of these rumors the whole



region was pretty thoroughly canvassed, and a record was made of all information obtained. These rumors will be treated of separately.

*Rune Books.* It was found that Mr. Ohman had a Swedish grammar, published in 1840, the author of which was C. J. L. Almquist, issued at Stockholm. This rumor was encountered by Mr. Holand, when he was in the neighborhood in 1907, when he procured the stone of Mr. Ohman. He saw the book, when Mr. Ohman was absent, as he asked Mrs. Ohman the privilege of examining Mr. Ohman's "library." He considered that it had nothing to do with the rune stone and discredited the rumor. When, more recently, interest in the stone became more active and the rumor became widespread, it was thought necessary to procure this "library," or at least to get the historical facts about the "rune book." It was purchased from Mr. Ohman for fifty cents, although he reluctantly parted with it, and would be glad to have it returned to him. On the front fly-leaf is written

*Sv. Fogelblad,  
Stockholm, d. 16 Nov. 1868.*

It is a duodecimo volume, and has 472 pages. On pages 117 and 118 are shown sixteen rune characters in vertical column, with their corresponding names and Roman equivalents.

Mr. Ohman, when asked where and when he obtained this book, stated that he got it from Mr. Anderson, who obtained it from a preacher. This was on the occasion of our second visit to Mr. Ohman's house. On occasion of our third visit he also stated that, after the rune stone was found, Mr. Anderson had suggested that he should take it home for the purpose of reading the rune record by means of the rune alphabet contained in it; that he did so, but found more characters on the stone than in the book, and could not translate the record, and that he had not returned the book. It transpired later that Mrs. Anderson and Mrs. Ohman are cousins.

*Sven Fogelblad.* When asked about the name on the fly-leaf at the front of the book, Mr. Ohman said that it was that of a broken-down preacher who used to be at Anderson's farm-



house, and who was then well known in the surrounding region, as he got a precarious living amongst the farmers, partly by teaching their children in little school-gatherings, by binding books, and by little light jobs, but principally by charity. He was always poor, by reason of his fondness for intoxicating liquor. He had his home, so far as he could claim one, at Mr. Anderson's farmhouse, and when he died, which was at the age of about seventy years, in 1895 or 1896, his books were left in the possession of Mr. Anderson. Mr. Samuel Olson, of Kensington, said he never saw Mr. Fogelblad, and is of the opinion that he died prior to his going there fifteen years ago. These points were verified by others. They were carefully followed up, because it had been intimated by some that Mr. Fogelblad may have traced out the runes for Mr. Ohman to carve on the stone, and that the "rune book" formerly owned by Mr. Fogelblad had been the source of the necessary knowledge. (See the Appendix for more concerning Mr. Fogelblad.)

Mr. John A. Holvik, a student of the United Church Seminary, St. Anthony Park, St. Paul, had begun a search for the book which Fogelblad left at Mr. Anderson's at the time of his death, said to have been at the house of Mr. Ohman and to have given aid to the engraving of the rune inscription. After the book was obtained in the investigation by this Committee, he examined it at leisure for two or three days, and wrote the following letter concerning it.

*Letter of John A. Holvik.*

St. Anthony Park, Minn., April 20th, 1910.

Prof. N. H. Winchell, St. Paul,

Dear Sir:

After comparing in detail the Kensington inscription with the book bearing the name of Sv. Fogelblad, I am prepared to make the following statements.

1. The book is a grammar of modern Swedish, published in 1840.
2. It contains some material on the development of the language:
  - (a) A system of runes;
  - (b) Noun declensions of Old and Middle Swedish;
  - (c) Verb conjugations of Old and Middle Swedish;

(d) Short selections to illustrate the language at different periods from A. D. 1200 to the present time.

(e) Selections to illustrate different dialects.

3. The rune system is the Futhork of sixteen characters. The runes of the inscription are the later "punctuated" (stungne) runes.

4. The declensions give the four cases for nouns in Old and Middle Swedish. The inscription has only nominative and genitive forms. Furthermore, the word for ship, used as a type word in the fifth declension, is spelled *skep* in Middle Swedish. The inscription has *skip*.

5. The conjugation gives plural inflection for all verbs in Old and Middle Swedish. The inscription uses singular verb forms with plural subjects.

6. A selection from the fifteenth century gives the constructions: "*wi ware . . . . wi hafwe . . . .* " The inscription has "*vi var . . . . vi har.*"

7. A selection from the year 1370 gives the preposition "a." The inscription uses the proposition "po" (which is objected to by some linguists).

8. Some of the rune characters indicate (according to some runologists) that the author of the inscription must be from Dalarne in Sweden. A selection in the book shows the characteristic diphthongs of the dialect of Dalarne; but a characteristic feature of the inscription is the lack of diphthongs.

To summarize: the difference in rune systems, and the so-called "errors" in the inscription, with some parallel correct forms in the book, make it evident that there is no connection between the inscription on the Kensington Rune Stone and the book bearing the name Sv. Fogelblad.

Yours truly,

J. A. HOLVIK.

#### OTHER RUMORS CONCERNING MR. OHMAN.

It was rumored that Mr. Ohman was a stone mason, and hence that he might be skillful in cutting rune letters. There seems to be no truth nor basis for this rumor, other than the natural desire to explain a puzzle. It may have been suggested by some one, asked by another whether true or not, intimated by another, and affirmed by the fourth. Once stated as a fact, it was hence additional evidence, united with the possession of the rune stone and the alleged possession of "rune books," that Mr. Ohman made the inscription on the stone. Mr. Ohman is a carpenter. No one was found who knew of his working as a stone mason, though several were asked.

The rumor that Mr. Ohman made rune characters on the sidewalks, on fences, and on granaries, asking people if they could read them,\* was apparently a very easy one to verify or disprove. And so it proved to be. Everywhere, whenever this statement was made, the question was asked whether the person making it ever knew of Mr. Ohman's making rune characters. The answer was, "No, but Mr. So-and-So can give you the facts. He lives at Brandon, or near Brandon." On arriving at Brandon, where the rumor was prevalent, I was directed to Mr. O——, who was said to know more of the peculiar mental processes of Mr. Ohman "than any man on earth." He at once declared that Mr. Ohman was in the habit of making rune characters, as a joke, and "knew all about runes." Asked to state whether he himself ever saw Mr. Ohman make runes at any time, disregarding the rumor, Mr. O. said he never had himself known of his making runes, but that Mr. Gunder Johnson, about four miles farther south, had known of his making runes. We drove then directly to Mr. Gunder Johnson's farm. The following is copied from our note book, written at the time of the interview:

"Mr. Gunder Johnson says his little testimony is not worth anything one way or the other. He knew Mr. Ohman, who built his house, about 26 or 27 years ago. Mr. Ohman and he were talking about old Norsk one day, and Ohman said there were old letters which were called runes, and Mr. Ohman took a pencil and made some on a board, saying they were runes. Mr. Johnson never knew of his making runes at any other time, nor of any preacher living with Ohman who made runes, nor any living in this country who could make them, nor any one passing through here who could make them."

Later, when Mr. Ohman was told that people said he made runes on sidewalks and on granaries, etc., he indignantly demanded, "Who said it?" When he was told that Mr. Gunder Johnson stated that he had made them on a board when he worked for Mr. Johnson 26 or 27 years ago, he denied it, but added that he "could not recall any conversation with Mr. Johnson about runes," and that if at any time he had said

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\*According to Professor Flom, it was Mr. Fogelblad who thus amused himself, and he mentioned also evidence that Mr. Ohman thus carved runes. He expresses his confidence in Mr. Ohman's veracity.

anything to Mr. Johnson about runes, "It was because he had learned it in school in Sweden. Every school boy, and every Swede and Norwegian, knows something about runes, but not so as to use them."

So far as we can see, therefore, the common rumor that Mr. Ohman made rune characters on the sidewalks and on fences, in hours of idleness, and was familiar with runic literature, was derived from the simple fact that 26 or 27 years ago, according to Mr. Gunder Johnson, though forgotten by Mr. Ohman, he had made some rune characters for Mr. Johnson with a pencil on a board when he was working on Mr. Johnson's house as a carpenter, in order to show him the kind of letters formerly used by the Scandinavians. The following is also extracted from our field book, bearing on the existence of this rumor.

"I found Mr. Gunder Johnson a very talkative man. I recall it now, and record it for its bearing on the existence and spread of the idea that Mr. Ohman knew runes long ago, had a number of books on runes, and made runic characters on the walks, window casings, and the granary doors about the country. I have traced up, under the direction of those who believed and repeated this story, all the promising lines of evidence, and I have found the report especially prevalent and detailed about Brandon, where Mr. Ohman lived 26 or 27 years ago. I have asked, not for the story, but for positive statements as to whether the parties affirming the story actually knew of Mr. Ohman's making runes. They said they did not, except Mr. Gunder Johnson, and some of them said they knew nothing about it except what emanated either from Mr. O. of Brandon or Mr. Gunder Johnson.

"The incident which seems to have given origin to the rumor was probably dormant until Prof. Breda and Prof. Curme pronounced the stone a fraud, and the stone had been returned to Ohman's farm. Then all the people began to speculate as to how the stone was inscribed. All minds turned to Mr. Ohman. Eight years passed. The knowledge of Mr. Gunder Johnson about Mr. Ohman's making runes, and the fact that he retained the fraudulent stone, were coupled together and seemed to explain each other, springing at once into importance, I have no doubt, through Mr. Johnson. The idea was, very naturally, given broadcast. There was no other possible explanation of a fraudulent rune stone found on Mr. Ohman's farm and kept by him, however indifferently.

"Mr. Ohman is a rather taciturn man, and he took no pains to counteract the report that he was the impostor. One man said that if the rune inscription were genuine, it was a very valuable historic document, and any man would have made it well known as a valuable possession, the inference being that, as Mr. Ohman did not make it notorious, he must have known it was fraudulent. His neighbors made sport of him for keeping, or even for having made, a fake inscription. Mr. Gunder Johnson's knowledge was amplified, as such rumors grow in a farming community, and some intimated that, as Fogelblad was a scholar, he was the man who traced out the runes for Mr. Ohman to cut on the stone.

"More lately, as it became known that Mr. Ohman had "rune books," the story was credited by many who had no knowledge of the case nor any personal acquaintance with Mr. Ohman; and during the last few years, when the recent renewal of inquiry about the stone became known by the people of this region, of course all the rumors, however increased in detail, were revived also, and there is no doubt that some have innocently spread the story, on the assumption that what was reported and was not denied must be true. In its exaggerated form it was sent in letters to members of this Committee, and these letters prompted this thorough investigation."\*

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\*The following correspondence, received after this Report was first written, bears upon the recollection of Mr. Gunder Johnson as to Ohman's writing runes for him.

*Clipping from the "Decorah Post."*

Rumor relates that Mr. Olof Ohman was accustomed to amuse himself with scratching runes. It happened that Prof. Winchell found the originator of this rumor in Gunder Johnson, of Brandon. Ohman maintained that he knew nothing about runes; but Gunder Johnson related that when Ohman, 26 or 27 years ago, built a house for him, he made some runes on a piece of wood to show what kind of writing was used in the old days in the Scandinavian lands. Ohman would not maintain that he had not done this, but said that he could not remember it.

*Letter from Hans Voigt, McIntosh, Polk County, Minn.*

[Translation.]

Mr. Olof Ohman:

16 May, 1910.

I clip this from the Decorah Post, and send it with the following remarks. Is the Gunder Johnson, in Brandon, who has started this rumor, that you used to amuse yourself with writing runes, the same as the Gunder Johnson, Højbergsner, from the town of Mo? If so, then the house referred to was built for him by you in 1882, and I was there and painted it; and if this is so, then I believe you remember me. I had, in fact, a wedding down there, and you were present. At that time I made on a piece of wood some marks which were, after a fashion, to represent runes, as he says. So it seems to me that it is this incident which has popped up in Mr. Johnson's memory. If this is right, then let me hear from you. I had a long time ago forgotten your name.

HANS VOIGT.



Ohman is not a thrifty farmer. His premises are in disorder. His cattle, pigs, chickens, and his children, have a common way of approach to his front door, and when it is muddy the floor of his house is also muddy. There is no grading, no sidewalk, no fence, to make his home pleasant; and it is plain that the farm is not at its best. This listlessness has its influence in estimating the causes of the apparent neglect of Mr. Ohman to make the most of his discovery. After the rune stone had been pronounced a fraud by two professors (Breda and Curme), his interest in it extended no further than to insist on its return to him. A Swede farmer, in ignorance of the ways and means to have the inscription further investigated, not fully knowing the English language, and having no spare money to use in a doubtful quest, he was obliged to let the stone rest in his yard uncared for.

It should not be inferred from the foregoing discussion of "rumors," as to Mr. Ohman's agency in fabricating the rune inscription, that there is a prevalent opinion connecting him with it. Most of the people, and especially his neighbors, believe that these rumors are baseless, and affirm their confidence in Mr. Ohman as well as in the genuineness of the rune stone. It is chiefly at a distance from Ohman's farm, and among strangers, that these rumors are sustained by those who have curiosity enough to form opinions about the discovery. The pastor, Rev. Mr. Saethre, of the church where Mr. Ohman's children were confirmed, said that Mr. Ohman came to that vicinity, to his knowledge, later than himself, which was twenty-five years ago. He is confident that Mr. Ohman, whom

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*Letter from Olof Ohman.*

[Translation.]

Prof. N. H. Winchell, St. Paul:

Today I received a letter from northern Minnesota, which in part clears up the reported rune scratches that I have been said to have made at Gunnar Johnson's when I built his house. I do not remember that I wrote any runes, either there or anywhere else. And as to Gunnar Johnson saying I know Old Norse, he is mistaken. I have never learnt the Icelandic language. Sincerely,

OLOF OHMAN.

This shows that Mr. Johnson's recollection is at fault, rather than Mr. Ohman's.



he has known ever since he came to his farm, "is utterly incapable of making the inscription." He has never heard that Mr. Ohman traveled about and made runes on the sidewalks and granaries in idle hours, nor has he ever heard of a clergyman in that region who did so.

#### THE TREE THAT GREW ON THE RUNE STONE.

As it is well established that a poplar tree grew in the soil above the stone, it is plain that the size of the tree has a direct bearing on the possible fabrication of the inscription by Mr. Ohman, or by any person since Mr. Ohman located on the farm. Mr. Samuel Olson, of Kensington, who was of the party that excavated in the earth where the stone was found, in the spring of 1899, expecting to find the remains of those who were massacred, made from memory a pencil sketch of the stump and roots of the tree as they appeared at that time, which is reproduced below.

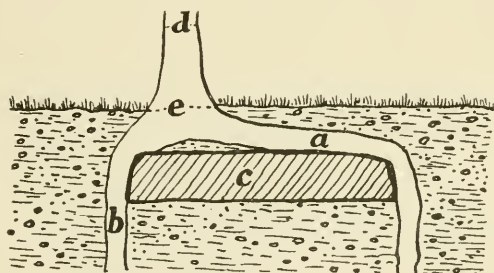


FIG. 1. THE POPLAR TREE AND THE RUNE STONE.

*a*, the largest root; *b*, the smaller roots that went down perpendicular; *c*, end of the stone; *d*, the tree 4 or 5 inches in diameter; *e*, the foot of the tree, 10 inches in diameter.

Note.—Mr. Ohman and his boy said that the main root went down the side instead of over the top.

No one was found who questioned the existence of this tree, nor the flatness of the roots caused by long contact on the stone. Indeed, one man who regarded Mr. Ohman as the possible maker of the inscription stated that he saw the roots and that they were flattened on one side.

The shortest time that has been assigned to the growth of the tree is ten years. Mr. Ohman took the first part of his farm in 1890. The stone was found in the fall of 1898 on that portion of his farm which was the earliest deeded to him, and which he received by warranty deed from Halvor Stenson. If Mr. Ohman is responsible for the stone, he must have buried it with its face downward in sufficient soil at once to support a young tree, and the tree would have had the period of eight years to attain the size which it had in 1898; and if the tree were as large as most of those who saw it have testified to, its growth in eight years is put entirely outside of possibility. It would then be possible still to presume that the stone was put there during the ownership of the land by Mr. Stenson. The Committee has taken no steps to ascertain the truth that might be in such a hypothesis, nor to learn anything of the antecedents of the land earlier than the record of the deeds to Mr. Ohman.

#### REVIEW OF THE FINDING OF THE RUNE STONE.

The foregoing sketch of the facts of the finding of the stone, and of the attendant conditions, embraces everything of importance that has come within the scope of our inquiry. It may be well, before leaving this part of the subject, to call attention to some obvious inferences which bear on the question of the authenticity of the stone.

1. The inscription was made upon a boulder of graywacke found in the near vicinity.

2. The inscribed face of the stone has not passed through even the latest glaciation, but the opposite side shows such glaciation that it may have witnessed two ice-epochs. The boulder had been split along an old jointage plane, and the inscription is mainly on the resultant even face. The inscribed edge was also, doubtless, caused by a jointage plane, but appears to have been shaped by hammering.

3. The inscribed face appears weathered so as to indicate that it was separated from its companion piece perhaps several thousand years ago (but has not been glaciated), or was affected by water that entered along the joint-opening for a

long time before such separation. The preservation of the calcite scale shows that since its separation it has been protected from the weather.

4. Two remarkable boulders are at the end of a sharp point, at the southwestern side of Pelican lake,\* and though they are not now surrounded by water, they probably were so 548 years ago, and may stand for the "skerries" referred to in the inscription. If the inscription is modern, the engraver could hardly refer to these boulders as "skerries." They are about twenty miles north of the place where the stone was found.

5. The stone was found on an elevation surrounded with a swamp, and it is in keeping with a slow known physical change to suppose that the elevation was formerly surrounded by water, and that the term "island" was applicable. If the inscription is modern, the engraver must have known that 548 years ago this elevation was an island.

6. The sea was said to be fourteen days' journey distant from the place of the stone.† The sea at Hudson bay is about

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\*Professor Flom has carelessly adopted a "Pelican lake" which lies in northern Otter Tail county, about 48 miles farther toward the northwest.

†It has been suggested by Mr. Holand that the inscription should be translated "forty-one days" instead of fourteen days; but such a use of the characters for 1 and 4 would require a similar use of the characters for 1 and 3 in the final date (1362), which would be impossible.

Keating says that the journey from Fort Douglas, which was one mile north of Fort Garry (now Winnipeg), to York Factory, required for canoes loaded with furs, 15 to 20 days, and in returning with supplies 30 to 35 days. Unloaded canoes usually traveled much faster, and probably made the journey in about half that time. Long's Expedition, Vol. II, p. 79.

Oliphant says (Minnesota and the Far West, p. 223) that he made 80 miles per day in descending the Mississippi river from Fort Ripley to Fort Snelling, and that in higher water 100 miles have been passed over in 8 hours.

Hennepin, in defending his asserted voyage to the mouth of the Mississippi in 1680, says it was not impracticable, that he had time enough and to spare, since canoes have been known to go 90 miles a day upstream.

Duluth, when he rescued Hennepin, declared that he travelled 80 leagues, or about 240 miles, in two days and two nights and till the next day at ten o'clock A. M., which was somewhat more than 100 miles per day. (Shea's Translation of Hennepin's Description of Louisiana, Appendix.)

Prof. Andrew Fossum first suggested the route from Hudson bay,

that distance from Douglas county, for a canoe party descending the Nelson river. If parties reached Minnesota by that route they must have brought boats with them by way of lake Winnipeg and the Red river of the North. It is not easy to see any reason for their leaving the regular watercourse and taking their boats across the country to Pelican lake, but if they were fishing on Pelican lake they must have had boats. At Pelican lake they would have been about twenty-five miles from the nearest point of the Red river of the North.

7. When found, the face of the stone was down. On any supposition as to the maker of the inscription it seems to be necessary to assume that it was not originally placed in that position. Owing to the easy disintegration of calcite in the weather, it is evident that the inscription is either recent or the stone was so placed (or was overturned) as to protect the inscription from the weather.

8. The age of the tree which was growing on the stone seems to show that the inscription was made prior to the occupancy of the farm by Mr. Ohman.

9. Mr. Fogelblad, whom rumor has associated with the stone, died in 1895, three years prior to the finding of the stone. The tree must have started to grow on the stone at least as early as 1888, according to the shortest estimate of its age. The committee has not learned the date of Mr. Fogelblad's coming to the region, not deeming it important. The relation of the rune stone to the Swedish grammar owned by Mr. Fogelblad at the time of his death is expressed by Mr. Holvik. According to his opinion, the book could not have been the source of the information necessary to construct the inscription.

and calculated that the downward trip could be made in about fourteen days. For the purpose of reaching more definite data the Committee has measured, on maps, the route in question, with the following result:

From Pelican lake to Pembina 35½ townships, right line	-	213 miles.
Pembina to lake Winnipeg, 1½ deg. lat.	- - - - -	103 miles.
Across lake Winnipeg, 1 2/3 deg. lat.	- - - - -	115 miles.
Lake Winnipeg to York Factory, 4½ deg. lat.	- - - - -	311 miles.
Add for crookedness	- - - - -	200 miles.

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Total traveled distance - - - - - 942 miles.

The trip therefore could be made in canoes in 14 days by travelling at the rate of about 67 miles per day.

10. If the stone is fraudulent, it seems necessary to exonerate both Mr. Fogelblad and Mr. Ohman from the imposition. (See the Appendix.)

#### NOTES ON THE RECORD GIVEN BY THE INSCRIPTION.

The inscription has been acceptably translated as below :

Eight Goths and twenty-two Norwegians upon a journey of discovery from Vinland westward. We had a camp by two skerries one day's journey north from this stone. We were out fishing one day. When we returned home, we found ten men red with blood and dead. A. V. M., save us from evil.

Have ten men by the sea to look after our vessels fourteen days' journey from this island. Year 1362.

Without reference at this time to the language used, and not considering the peculiarities of the grammatical inflections, it may be worth while to take a general view of the record.

One is struck first with the simplicity of the statements and the omission of non-important details. This simplicity, unfortunately for the historical value of the record, goes so far as to omit the name of the leader of the party, as well as that of the patron or king who may have sent it out.

It is a mixed party, of Swedes and Norwegians. By reason of the order in which these are mentioned it is probable that the scribe was a Swede, since he names them first, although composing only about one quarter of the whole party.

The party started from Vinland, a very remarkable statement in the light of the fact that it is not known, even at this day, that a permanent or even a temporary colony was established in Vinland. The expression "from Vinland" may mean in a direction westward from Vinland. In the light of the results of Professor Fernald's studies on the "Plants of Wine-land the Good," it is remarkable, if the stone is fraudulent, that the location of Vinland, by the statements of the record, should agree with the location of that country by Fernald, since all modern (and even earlier) descriptions of Vinland have placed Vinland either in Nova Scotia or in Massachusetts. Could it have been a random and accidental coincidence, that a fraudulent record should correct the current historical belief



of the times? How could an impostor come to the knowledge that Vinland was nowhere except in Labrador or at least in the region about the entrance to Hudson strait? What credit could be given to his record by going counter to the accepted history of his time? This agreement with the latest research as to the location of Vinland is a very suggestive fact.

They went "westward" from Vinland, and they had their ships till within fourteen days' journey of the end of their exploration, when they left them "at the sea," with ten men to guard them. If the record be fraudulent, what reason could there be for saying that their camp was fourteen days' journey from the sea? How much more probable it would be to say that their camp was forty days or even two months' journey from the sea, especially if Vinland was where it has been thought to be; and how much more probable that an impostor would not attempt to make a definite statement. If the record is fraudulent, the impostor was very foolish not only in giving the distance of their camp from the sea, but also in saying how far it was north from the stone. Not only so, but he attempted, more foolishly, to give guides to the exact location of the camp by saying it was "near two skerries." If the stone had been noticeably more than one day's march from those skerries, or if the camp had been noticeably nearer or more distant than fourteen days' journey from "the sea," there would be much doubt thrown upon the record by such a discrepancy.

The exactness with which the location of the camp is described can be attributed to the probable burial of the ten men at the camp, and the natural desire to describe geographically the place of the bloody massacre of ten of their comrades; while the agreement of this exactness with the facts in nature shows how improbable it was for a faker runologist to have made the inscription. If the record be fraudulent, it is a remarkable fact that those two skerries exist, and at the right distance, and that there are no others.\*

It is still more remarkable, on the hypothesis that the stone

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\*Other lakes in the vicinity, within a possible range of twenty miles, have been searched over by Prof. Fossum, Rev. O. A. Norman, and Mr. H. R. Holand, without finding anything that could be called "two skerries."



is fraudulent, that within modern times they could not be called skerries, as they are not now surrounded by water. Hence the impostor-scribe was not only a runologist, but he was able to look backward through the physical change that has come over the region, and to describe those boulders as they were 548 years ago, when there is no doubt that the water of the lake was so high as to surround them and thus warrant the description which he made of them. He must have been a geologist.

If the record is fraudulent, it is also remarkable that the impostor could see that 548 years ago the hill on which the stone was placed was surrounded by water so as to warrant the application of the term "island." He must have known, and must have made allowance for the fact, that within recent time the country has dried up considerably, and that what are now marshes were then lakes.

If the stone be fraudulent, it is singular that the impostor ran the risk of all these details and violated none of them. A well considered fraud is usually characterized by the omission of details. Here was a recklessness and a fearlessness amongst details which betoken honesty and truth. The very discrepancies, where the details diverge from present geographic knowledge, when correctly understood are turned to so many points of confirmation.

"We were out fishing one day." That is a remarkable and rather singular statement, especially if the stone be fraudulent, since the fishing was on a lake twenty miles distant from the place at which the inscription was made. Again, they must have had boats. There is no reference to them. Where could they have got boats? Not a word is said as to how they reached the place where they were encamped, nor as to the direction to the sea. Such links as are necessary to make a connected and reasonable story would certainly be given by an impostor. But here the briefest statement is made of the leading facts, and the reader is left to connect them as best he can. We are not at a loss to supply the links. The boats must have been birch bark canoes, used to this day by the northern

Indians, easy to propel in the water and easy to "portage" over the land.

"We found ten men red with blood and dead." That is a remarkable statement. Why should the fact of the gory appearance of the dead men be stated at all? and especially why should it be stated before stating the fact of death? The murderers are not mentioned nor indicated. These peculiarities in the record may be explained by attributing the massacre to Indians, with whom they may have had some dealing. The appearance of the bloody corpses implies the scalping knife. The appearance of the bodies is stated before the fact of their death, and must have made a deep impression on the explorers, although it is probable that the men were dead before they were scalped. If the stone is fraudulent, it is singular that, within modern times, when the scalping of white men by Indians is a familiar fact, the massacre should be described in that manner. An impostor would hardly observe the nicety of the significance in inverting the terms of description, or that of mentioning the bloody appearance of the dead at all.

Then comes the most remarkable feature of this remarkable inscription, "A. V. M." Hail, Virgin Mary! or Ave Maria. This is a distinctly Catholic expression. According to Archbishop Ireland, no modern Scandinavian would utter it, as they are Lutherans. It would be strictly appropriate in 1362. If the stone be fraudulent, the impostor artfully employed a term suitable to the date of the inscription; but we would hardly expect an impostor, such as this man must have been, to be so religious as to call on Mary, or on any of the gods of the Vikings, or on any of the saints of Christianity. On the supposition that the stone is fraudulent, this is a decided anachronism and would hardly be introduced by an impostor.

If the stone is fraudulent, the base perpetrator was artful enough to make use of rune characters appropriate to the date 1362. The ancient runes are sixteen in number, according to the grammar of Almquist. The inscription contains several characters not found in the old runic alphabet, and some that are peculiar to itself or to some locality.

Rev. O. A. Norman, of Ashby, called our attention to a sin-

gular coincidence, viz., the frequency of the expression calling upon Mary, in Scandinavia, at the time of the "black death," which prevailed in the fourteenth century. A poem or song, entitled "Fornesbronnen," was recited at the burials of the many dead, and appears to have become well known. It was lately reprinted in a brochure at Fergus Falls, Minn., entitled "Telesoga." Each verse ends with an appeal to Mary to grant help and freedom from evil. The sudden and bloody death of ten of their comrades seems to have impressed the living in a manner similar to the mysterious death of the black plague. If the stone be fraudulent, the impostor seems to have been aware of the prevalence of that prayer in the fourteenth century, and very shrewdly appended it at the proper place in this inscription.

It appears, from several considerations, that the scribe was a rather illiterate Swede. If the stone be fraudulent, it is singular that such a man should prove himself capable of such literary and historical knowledge, and of such artful cunning. If the stone be fraudulent, it seems necessary to suppose that a non-educated Swede should be able to make the inscription and to accomplish the following:

1. A simple, straightforward record.
2. Correct the prevalent notion as to the whereabouts of Vinland.
3. Refer to two skerries, which could not have existed when the record was made but did exist 548 years ago.
4. Refer to an island, which was not an island when the stone was inscribed, but was so 548 years ago.
5. Define exactly the location of the camp with reference to the seaside and with reference to the stone.
6. Describe the massacre in such a way as to indicate that the men were scalped by Indians, although no mention is made of Indians.
7. Make the prayer to the Virgin Mary common in Scandinavia in 1362, but anachronistic in the nineteenth century.
8. As an impostor, utter the common prayer of a devout Catholic of the fourteenth century.

9. Use in part some ancient runic characters instead of those common in later centuries.

10. All this deceit and laborious cunning, without any ascertainable motive, perpetrated in an unpopulated, or at most only a sparsely inhabited, region amongst a wilderness of forests.

#### LINGUISTIC OBJECTIONS.

Notwithstanding these considerations, which point toward the genuineness of the Kensington Rune Stone, there are linguistic objections, which, it is claimed, are insurmountable. It is claimed by those who are expert in the Scandinavian languages, and who present those difficulties, that linguistic evidence is paramount in importance, and that other considerations are pertinent only after the linguistic objections are removed.

A summary statement of these objections is about as follows:

Certain words not in use in Sweden at the date given the inscription, viz.:

*opdagelse*. It is pointed out that this word is not in Sodervall's dictionary, nor in that of Kalkar, the latter being a dictionary of the old Danish (and Swedish) language covering the years 1300 to 1700, and that in modern Swedish the word *opdage* is *uppdaga*; that "*opdagelse*" is made by adding to the root the suffix *else*, which in the form *ilsi* is not found in Swedish or Danish prior to 1300; that "*opdage*" itself is a borrowed word, allied to the Dutch *opdagen* and the German *entdecken*; and that, if it had existed in 1362, its only meaning could have been *dawning*.

*po*, which appears twice in the inscription. This word, derived from *upp a* becomes *pa* and *paa*, and in Sodervall's dictionary is said to date from about 1400, and to have, in the older Swedish, only the active sense, "to designate an action by some one, or a condition or state of a person," which is not the sense in which it is used here.

*laeger* is objected to as a word in Swedish at the date of 1362, on the ground that it shows a Germanic influence, dating

from the sixteenth century or later, its earliest date in Kalkar being 1534.

*dag* is, on the stone, *thag* (or *dhag*), meaning day, but in 1362 *d* had supplanted *dh* and should have been used. The use of "the thorn" (the rune þ for *dh* or *th* or *d*) indicated a modern Swede runologist. The same objection lies against *dh* in *opdagelse*, *Vinland*, and *dcd*, and other words.

*vore skip* should have been written *vorum skipum*, to agree with the language of Sweden in 1362.

*har*, *var*, *kom*, and *fan*, are first person plurals, as used, and should have the ending *om*, viz., *hafthom* (or *hathom*), *varom*, *komom*, and *funnom*. These would have been found in the "Mariaklagan," had any first person plurals been used in the part with which comparison is made, since in the third person plurals found in it the full inflectional endings are used.

*dcd* (or *theth*, or *dhcdh*) should have been *dødh*, and is apparently a reflection of the English word "dead."

*from* is English.

*mans* is an incorrect plural English word for *men*.

ø is written with *e* rune inside an *ö*. *ö* appears for the first time in Swedish in 1495.

In short, the language of the stone, it is claimed, is a mixture of modern Swedish, Norwegian, and English.

It is fortunate for the cause of historic truth, no less than for linguistic criticism applicable to the inscription of this stone, that quite a number of American as well as some European experts in runes and in Scandinavian literature have given close attention to this stone, and have afforded their aid to the Committee in their efforts to reach a warrantable conclusion as to the authenticity of the record for the date which it claims. The Committee has also taken advantage of the published opinions of others, so far as we have learned of them, whenever such opinions have been based on specific and critical linguistic points. A mere "opinion," pro or con, has been passed by without consideration; for it is plain that not only the labor would be practically endless should the Committee entertain unsupported opinions, but that in the end the result would be based on others' opinions and would not be a



creditable and judicial consideration of the problems with which the Committee is charged.

The following eminent and critical scholars have aided the Committee, and to them the thanks of the Historical Society are due:

Helge Gjessing, University of Christiania, Norway;

Hjalmar Rued Holand, Ephraim, Wis.;

O. J. Breda, Christiania, Norway, formerly of the University of Minnesota;

George O. Curme, Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill.;

Chester N. Gould, University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill.;

Rasmus B. Anderson, Madison, Wis.;

Dr. Knut Hoegh, Minneapolis, Minn.;

Gisle Bothne, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis;

John O. Evjen, Augsburg Seminary, Minneapolis;

Andrew Fossum, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minn.;

P. P. Iverslie, Minneapolis, Minn.;

George T. Flom, University of Illinois, Urbana, Ill.;

Julius E. Olson, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wis.;

J. A. Holvik, United Church Seminary, St. Anthony Park, St. Paul, Minn.;

Olaf Huseby, Norwegian journalist and author, Fosston, Minn.;

J. J. Skordalsvold, Minneapolis, Minn., formerly professor of Norwegian Literature in Augsburg Seminary;

O. E. Hagen, Meridian, Wis., formerly professor in the University of South Dakota, Vermilion, S. D.

It is needless to say that among these there is divergence of testimony, and sometimes contrariety, not only in the results which they have reached, but sometimes in their estimates of the value of the linguistic peculiarities of the language of the inscription.

With one exception, the members of the Committee are all linguistic scholars and are capable of judging the force of linguistic arguments, *pro* or *con*, and we have attempted to compare judiciously the evidence that has been adduced.

It should be remarked at the outset that the argument against the rune inscription is like this: As the translation of



the Bible in King James' version does not employ the words *boy* or *girl*, but instead uses *lad* and *damsel*, if a book purporting to be a copy of the King James version were found to contain the words *boy* and *girl*, it would at once be classed as fraudulent. Likewise if words are found in the Kensington rune stone inscription which were not in use in 1362, the inscription is fraudulent. But it is evident at once that such a comparison of these cases involves a possible error. Two books actually in print can be compared with preciseness, and one can be pronounced a fraud with positiveness when it does not agree with its prototype. In the case of this stone, a definite inscription is to be compared with a "usage," and it is the wide uncertainty of that usage that gives rise to the variety of evidence and opinion.

It should be remarked also that the usage with which the stone may be compared may be that of a considerable period of time, say a whole century; it may be that of high-class and dignified literature, or that of common or ordinary writing, or that even of everyday speech. It is plain therefore that it is important to determine the standard to which the inscription ought to show a conformity. It should also be remembered that, as in English, these standards change from one into the other with lapse of time. A usage which was prevalent only in common speech, say in the fourteenth century, might be found in literature in the fifteenth century, and in the more dignified language of legal documents not till the sixteenth century. As our slang words creep slowly into literature, and finally are recognized in the standard dictionaries, so the colloquial terms and usage of the Swedish gradually came into use in the higher type of literature.

It is agreed by all, so far as we have learned, that the inscription, whether false or genuine, was made by a Swede and a rather unlettered man, a good mechanic, and probably from ancient Gothland, now the south part of Sweden, or from Visby, on the island of Gothland, where foreigners were numer-

ous from all commercial points in Europe.\* In such a city the influence of foreign languages would be apparent and more pronounced than in any other part of Sweden, except perhaps Stockholm. If the engraver of the inscription were an unlettered Swede, it appears that the standard with which it should be compared is not that of high-class standard literature, whether legal documents, educational treatises, or poems, but more reasonably the colloquial vernacular of Gothland. It would be necessary to allow for some effect of German and perhaps English contiguity. Hence, as the stone claims to date from the fourteenth century, it is reasonable to compare it with the colloquial usage of that century.

Here arises another important consideration, viz., the fourteenth century was a period of change and confusion, arising from the introduction of Christianity. Here was in full swing the transition to the modern forms and usages. Indeed the language of Sweden and Denmark in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries "was much like that of the present."† and, "to that degree agrees with the new that nothing except an occasional business or law expression will stop a reader of the present."‡ This change was not accomplished without much irregularity, and perhaps this is most apparent in the fourteenth century. The German language made a powerful impress on the Swedish. Dahlerup declares, "Never has our language received so great influence from abroad (especially Middle Low German) as it received in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries."|| Those irregularities consisted in a more or less prevalent dropping of case endings, disregard of grammatical agreements, especially in common speech, and differences of spelling.

\*The present city of Goteborg was founded in 1619. An earlier town of the same name, on the island of Hisingen, not far from the present site, had been destroyed by the Danes during the Calmar war (Enc. Brit.); but as that had been founded within twenty years before the new town (History of Sweden, by Victor Nilsson, 1899, pp. 188, 189), it appears reasonable to consider the scribe to have been a native of Visby on the large island of Gothland, which was an important commercial city from the twelfth century to the seventeenth.

†Dahlerup, *Det Danske Sprogs Historie*, 1896, p. 31.

‡Kalkar, *Ordbog*, p. xxxii; also f. n. to p. xxxi.

||Op. cit., p. 26.

With these facts in mind, we will examine in succession the difficult linguistic points which we have already mentioned.

*opdagelse* is claimed to be a modern word. It is a serious objection to this word that it is not found in two standard dictionaries, Sodervall's and especially Kalkar's, the latter purporting to be a dictionary of the old Danish (and Swedish) language, covering the years 1300 to 1700. The root of the word was known, also the prefix *op* (*upp*), and the suffix *else* (*ilse*). It was a neuter verb, signifying *to appear, to dawn*. In the inscription it has an active signification, *to discover*. Yet Kalkar gives a quotation dating from 1634 in which this word appears in its active sense, viz., "*Et skib med røfvere for landit var opdaget*" (*A vessel with pirates was discovered off shore*). The fact that the date of this quotation is 1634 does not show that this signification of this word was not in earlier use, for Kalkar gives numerous other quotations with dates showing similar German influence, dated later than their known earliest use, as follows:

*understanda* is dated 1610, but is found in *Den Jydske Lov* of 1241. (Brandt, *Gammeldansk Læsebog*, 1856, p. 29, line 15.)

*ophange* in dated 1575, used in a provision of Waldemar Seier of 1250 (ditto, 41, 3, as *uphengia*).

*opladha*, dated by Kalkar 1550, used in a diploma of 1329 (ditto, 77, 5, as *uplader*); and numerous others.

Kalkar's dictionary was not complete. He is now compiling a supplement, which will contain hundreds of words missed by him in his first edition. The following, similar to *opdagelse*, may be mentioned, in use about 1400, which were omitted by Kalkar: *opfostre*, *upfodde*, *opbrande*, *opraettilsae*, *forymmels*, *paamindelse* (ditto, 98, line 23; 169, 8; 168, 6). This shows simply that *opdagelse* may have been one of the common words omitted by Kalkar, and therefore that the absence of this word in Kalkar's Danish dictionary is not certain evidence that it was not in use in Gothland in 1362, at least in common speech; for, as has been remarked already, the standard dictionaries of any language are the last to rec-

ognize innovations, such as this appears to have been, from other languages.

We fail to see the force of the objections to *opdagelse* in the fact that the modern Swedish for *opdage* is *uppdaga*. The use of the older word seems to us rather to be a difficulty in assigning the inscription to modern invention.

The difficulty with *po* in the inscription consists of two parts: (1) It is used earlier than is recognized by Sodervall's dictionary; and (2) it is used correctly to designate "an action by some one, or a condition or state of a person," which is thought to be not the sense in which it is used here.

The fact that Sodervall's dictionary assigns this word to "about 1400" is in some degree an objection to its use in 1362; yet, if it be recalled that in common speech many words are in use long before they are recognized in standard literature and in dictionaries, and that the difference of time here amounts to only thirty-eight years, it appears to the Committee that the word *po* was more likely than not to have been known and used at the date assigned to the rune stone. In the middle of the fourteenth century, moreover, we find *pa*, *po*, and *upa*, used side by side.

As to the significance of the word *po* (on), used as a preposition before the word *opdagelse*, its force, as defined by the objectors, is to be inferred from the connection. "On a journey of discovery" implies a verb such as going, and if that be supplied the phrase reads "going on a journey of discovery," which gives the preposition exactly the sense required.

Again, it is quite likely that in pronunciation *pa*, the original word which became *paa*, was sounded so nearly like *po* that the unlettered scribe preferred *po* to any other spelling. Further, as there was no rune character for *aa*, this sound was commonly expressed by the rune for *o*.

*laeger*. The original Norse form was *legr*, but in Swedish the *e* became *ä*, and under the influence of German contact the word took the form of *laeger*, or *läger*. It is assumed by the objectors that this final form was due to the sixteenth century and hence could not have been used in 1362; but Falk and Torp state that in Swedish-Danish the transition from *e* to *ä*

took place about 1200 (Lydhistorie, Kristiania, 1898, page 11, No. 2).

It is further objected to this word that in the sense here employed (camp) it was not employed in 1362, but meant *burial place* or *lying together*; yet Kalkar illustrates it in the sense used in the inscription, viz., "The angels of the Lord built their camp round about them: *Herrins engel slaar lögren omkring thennom*" (date of this writing, 1524?). This dictionary covers the period from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century.

*dhag*, *opdhagelse*, *Vinlandh*, *dhed*, and other words in the inscription, are spelled with the rune character þ (called *thorn*). It is claimed that the more modern character for *d* (ᚠ) had supplanted the "thorn" in 1362, and ought to have been used. The thorn was usually used at this time for both *th* and *dh*; but it appears that *t* was gradually supplanting *th*, and *d* was taking the place of *dh*. It is plain from all sides that the thorn (þ), used exclusively on the inscription, was warrantable as a character either for that dental which was sounded *th*, or for that which was sounded by *dh*. At the same time, so far as we can learn, the distinct character for *d* (ᚠ) had a recognized existence; but whether there was any rule or regulated practice, in 1362, as to the use of ᚠ for *d*, we have been unable to find out. No one has referred to any regulated practice, and it seems to us that any criticism demanding the exclusive use of the character for *d* (ᚠ) in 1362 where the inscription shows *dh*, should be supported by such a rule. There is not a word in the inscription which calls for the dental sound *th*, and it is hence plain that where the thorn sign (þ) is used it was intended to take the place of the sign for *dh* (or for *d*).

Further, while the character ᚠ was used at the time, it occurs so rarely that it seems most runesmiths were ignorant of its existence or ignored it. For instance, it does not occur a single time in the twenty-six Swedish and Danish runic inscriptions from the middle period quoted by Vigfussen on pages 447-449 of his "Icelandic Reader and Grammar." The thorn however occurs 142 times in these same inscriptions. It appears also



that there was great latitude in the use of this character þ, in that it not only commonly represented *th* and *dh*, but also frequently *d*, and even *t*. In inscription No. 4, on page 448, we find *ristu* spelled with þ instead of the *t*. Therefore, while ʝ (or *d*) might have been accessible in elementary text-books, the writer of the inscription has shown a close agreement even with written usage in Sweden in the middle ages, by using þ exclusively. Had ʝ only been used, that character, as it seems to the Committee, would have constituted a greater objection than the exclusive use of þ.

*hadhe, har, var, kom, and fan.* These are unquestionably verb forms of the first person plural, past tense (*har* is present), used by the rune-maker, and purporting to be from the date of 1362. The validity of these forms is questionable. It is evident that if fraudulent these abbreviated terms might be those which the inscriber of the stone would employ in the nineteenth century. The Committee are of the opinion that if these five verb forms cannot be satisfactorily explained, the stone will be suspected as a forgery. They have therefore given particular attention to the question whether such abbreviations were warrantable in the year 1362.

The statement has been made already, in general terms, that this was a period in the history of the Danish-Swedish and Danish-Norse languages when great confusion prevailed, because of a tendency toward the modern usages, and it would be possible to assign such verb changes to that general statement. The Committee, however, have thought that, owing to the sweeping character of this difficulty, it would be well to disregard the general principle, and to find, if possible, examples in practice dating from the fourteenth century, of such verb changes as are here shown by the rune stone.

Dahlerup, commenting on this period, says: "Numerous verb forms, especially in documents showing Jutland influences, show that the speech undoubtedly in many parts [of the country] had given up the logical use of the plural forms" (*Det Danske Sprogs Historie*, p. 33). As an example of this he quotes: "*Alle fygle som hedder volucres pa Latin*," "*the faar*," "*the gik*," "*the kan*," "*I seer*," etc. In all these illus-



trations we find singular verbs with plural subjects. We have other examples of this, as in a letter of 1340, which begins, "*Allac men thettæ bref 'ser eller hør*" (Brandt's *Läsebog*, p. 79, line 1). Similarly a letter of 1329 begins, *Allac maen thettæ bref ser aeldaer høræc* (ditto, 77, 1). This shows at least that the old classic rule, that the inflectional ending of the verb must agree with its subject, was not maintained in the fourteenth century. The third person plural preterite for *hafa* is *höfdu*; but as early as 1200 we find *Witherlax men hawdhe honum uræt giort*" (Kong Knuts Viderlagsret in Brandt's *Läsebog*, p. 39, line 1). Gamle Kong Eriks Krönike, written about 1320, says, "*The hado upätith therra maat*" (Svenska Medeltidens Rim-Krönikor, G. E. Klemmings's edition, Stockholm, 1865, first part, line 1514; see also line 2581). Upsala Krönike, of the fourteenth century, reads, "*hadæ møss* [plural] *aedæ opp øxen som var af osth giord* (Hunde Kongen og Snio in Hallenberg, No. 51, also quoted in Brandt's *Läsebog*, p. 72, line 1). In Mandevilles Reiser, of about 1400, we similarly find *hadhe*: "*ikeac hadhæc ry...frem kommit*" (Brandt's *Läsebog*, 123, 10); "*ta ry hadæ gongit hoos tho milæc*," etc. (ditto, 122, 16). See also the frequent use of "*the hadæ*," they had, in Svenske Medeltidens Rim-Krönikor.

As to the form *har*, here used in place of the regular full inflectional *haffrom*, we find that in many, perhaps in most, writings of the fourteenth century, the termination of the first person plural, *rom*, had largely disappeared. It is retained, however, in an important work dating from 1320, *Gamle Eriks Krönike*, where also nearly all the old endings are preserved. Instead of *haffrom*, we find the modern forms *have* or *haver*; but, according to Falk and Torp, for a long time the *r* was elided in pronunciation, making *ha* and *har*, or was replaced, even in the fourteenth century, by *u*, the following *e* being dropped. Thus: "*Iak haur af herrana hör*" (Gamle Eriks Krönike, 1320, Klemming's ed., line 4404); "*Thet haur konung Bierge giort*" (ditto, line 4480). The rhythm also shows that it was pronounced as a single syllable. Similarly in a diploma of 1386 we read, "*Wi have unt oe lathet wore keræc bymæn* (Brandt's *Läsebog*, p. 79, line 18). In a letter of Queen Mar-

garet, of 1393, we read: "*Meth al theue rät som han og honnes fathir ther til have haft og have.*" In the last two instances *u* (or *v*) is *w*, which also illustrates the confusion which has, in all modern languages, attended those half consonants. In the next, *u* is plainly and simply used for *v*. In a book of remedies, about 1360, we read "*Wi hana nu talet ok sagt oc serewät thet som tharflekt ar*" (Molbech's Ordbog, xlix); also, "*Thom ther hauer howeth wärk,*" etc. (ditto, xlix).

Summarizing our inquiry on this word, we find:

(a) that the plural *hafrom* had been largely dropped in the fourteenth century;

(b) that the singular for *harer* had largely superseded it;

(c) that according to Falk and Torp, eminent philologists, this *v* has long been dropped phonetically;

(d) that *haur*, the immediate phonetic predecessor of *har*, occurs sporadically in Gamle Eriks Krönike, the ablest literary work of the times, written in 1320.

If we add to this a probable advance in phonetic and grammatic development in the region of Gothland, there seems to be no longer remaining any valid objection to the use of the spelling seen on the stone.

It should further be borne in mind that the author of this inscription, if it be genuine, would be extremely unlikely to be an educated literary man, but rather a plain man of action. As such he would write as he spoke. On the contrary an impostor of today, trying to reproduce the language of an ancient period, could only be a philologist, and would try to follow the literary usage of the time, instead of employing forms adapted to his own day. The apparently modern, but defensible, use of the word *har*, is therefore, in the opinion of this Committee, good evidence of the phonetic authorship of the record in the fourteenth century.

*rar* is the first person plural, used for the old and regular form *rarum*. The discussion of *har* applies largely to this word. In the fourteenth century it was the common form. In the chronicle of the Danish kings, written about 1250 and 1300, we find the singular and plural forms struggling side by side. In line 12 we read, *Hialti ok Birghi rar i haus tima.*"

while in line 15 we read, "*Slenge ok Vege varu i hans tima.*" After this time the singular *var* is dominant. Many illustrations could be given of plural subjects used with the singular *var*. *Var* is frequently seen in the form *rare*, as "*tha rare wi aey fraelste aff helvredis nödh*" (devotional poem from about 1425, Brandt's *Läsebog*, p. 262, 8).

*kom* is used for *komom*, the plural ending, like others already discussed, having been dropped off in the period under discussion.

*fan*. This form, although we have no examples to quote, may be assumed to have been used for the old plural form, analogous to *kom*, *var*, and *har*.

*dhedh* (or *dedh*). The use of *e* for *ø* or *ae*, in the fourteenth century, or vice versa, was frequent. Hence the uncritical maker of the inscription did not pass beyond the warrant of his time. The Danish dialect had *ded* in 1390. It is evident that the thorn (*þ*) must have been intended here to express the symbol *dh* (*th* as in *this*, and not *th* as in *thistle*), which in English found its equivalent in *d*, and in German in the word *todt*. The spelling of this word may have been influenced somewhat by a knowledge of the English pronunciation of the same word, and by the Danish *ded*.

*from* in its form is English. It is given, however, by Falk and Torp's *Etymologisk Ordbog*, as occurring sporadically in the old Swedish, meaning *from*. The easy phonetic substitution of *o* for long *a* or *au* is so apparent in this word that it needs no effort at explanation. The letter *m*, however, is in this place quite antique, unless it is adopted directly from the English, and seems to furnish an argument for the authenticity of the stone rather than against it.

In the old Aurland's church in Sogn, Norway, completed in the Catholic time, about 1300, there was a pair of very small panes of glass. The two panes were a present to the church "from" so-and-so. When the church was razed, the panes were bought by an enlightened gentleman in the district, and they may be found safely treasured there yet.

The work entitled "*Gamle Eriks Krönike*" was the product of some writer living in that part of Sweden known as Vest-

gotland, written about 1320. This work contains a great many of the words of the inscription, used in the same meaning. This was perhaps the home of the Göter mentioned in the inscription.

This inquiry might be extended so as to include several other words that have been criticised, but as we have brought under review the chief of the objections from a linguistic point of view, we deem it unnecessary to go further into details.

From the examination of the language of the stone the Committee think that they are warranted in making the following conclusions:

1. It cannot be the work of some unlettered amateur of the present day.

2. It is either the uncritical record of an exploration of the fourteenth century, or the fabrication of a consummate philologist familiar with the dialect of Vestgotland in the fourteenth century, which was essentially the Dalske dialect of Dalarne of the sixteenth century.

3. No expert philologist would make the blunder of writing *ded* for *död*. A modern philologist familiar with the evolution of *ö* from *au* would hardly make such an error, but such phonetic mistakes were common among the uncritical people of the fourteenth century.

4. The peculiarity of spelling "and" as both *ok* and *og* is abhorrent to the scientific precision of a modern philologist, but was very natural in the fourteenth century, when the sounds of *k*, *t*, and *p*, were frequently confounded with those of *g*, *d*, and *b*.

5. The use of the phrase, "*vi var ok fiske*," belongs in the same class of colloquialisms as *skullen* for *skulde han*, *haden* for *harde han*, etc. These phrases are all on the lips of the people in common speech, but no well informed person would suffer them to appear in a serious narrative in writing. But in the fourteenth century, with its greater phonetic freedom, they were all common.

6. Several obsolete words, which were in use in the fourteenth century, such as *laeger*, *rise*, *skjar*, *af illy*, and *from*, as well as the peculiar numeral characters, strongly indicate

that no modern impostor made the inscription, as the works of scholars proving that they were in use at that time have mainly been published since the stone was found.

7. The linguistic internal evidences of the genuineness of the stone coincide with and confirm the indications that come from the finding of the stone and its attendant condition.

8. The numeral which expresses the number of days' journey distant from the seashore is more probably meant for *fourteen* than *forty-one*.

#### COLLATERAL EVIDENCE.

Attention should be called again to the stone found by Verendrye and sent by him to Paris in 1737-40. The characters could not be read by any parties in Quebec, but were believed to be of Tartarean origin, there being then a belief entertained by many scholars and archeologists that America was peopled by Asiatics. The particulars of this finding, so far as they are known, are given by the Swedish botanist Kalm, who traveled in America in 1748-51.

Again, there was evidently European blood in the Mandan Indians. All travelers who visited them reported instances of light-colored hair and skin, and blue eyes. Catlin presumed that the party of Madoc, a Welsh prince, had reached them, and that their descendants would account for the remarkable physiognomy. It is doubtful, however, that the mixing of the dark Iberian complexion of the Welsh with that of the Indians would ever produce blue eyes, while it seems certain that the blond complexion of the Northmen of Europe would produce them.

These facts constitute an *a priori* affirmative case indicating that people from northern Europe mingled with the Mandan Indians.

#### RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE MUSEUM COMMITTEE.

The following resolutions, which were adopted unanimously by this Committee April 21, 1910, are not expected to terminate the investigation, but to show the present belief of its members.



*Resolved*, That this Committee renders a favorable opinion of the authenticity of the Kensington rune stone, provided, that the references to Scandinavian literature given in this Committee's written report and accompanying papers be verified by a competent specialist in the Scandinavian languages, to be selected by this Committee, and that he approve the conclusions of this report.

*Resolved*, that this action of the Committee be reported to the next meeting of the Executive Council, and that Mr. Holand be so informed.

E. C. MITCHELL, Chairman.

F. J. SCHAEFER,

O. D. WHEELER,

N. H. WINCHELL,

WARREN UPHAM, Secretary.

In the next monthly Council Meeting, May 9, 1910, this subject was introduced by Rev. Edward C. Mitchell, chairman of the Committee, and large parts of this Report were read by Professor Winchell, followed by his presentation, for the Committee, of these Resolutions. After much discussion by the President and several members of the Council and others of the Society, the Council voted that the Report and Resolutions of the Museum Committee be received and printed, with a statement that the Council and Society reserve their conclusion until more agreement of opinions for or against the rune inscription may be attained.

Subsequently Professor Bothne, having been selected by the Museum Committee, in accordance with its resolutions, for verification of references and a statement of his opinion, sent to the committee the following letter.

The University of Minnesota,  
Minneapolis, July 19, 1910.

Prof. N. H. Winchell,

Dear Sir: I am going away tomorrow, and cannot attend your meeting next Saturday. I have examined your report



carefully, have visited Kensington and neighborhood, and have read most of the papers and articles relating to the rune stone.

I have always believed with the great authorities of Norway and Sweden, Magnus Olsen, Moltke Moe, M. Hogstad, Bugge, Noreen, Schrick, Montelius, that the language is too modern, besides being faulty; and a more careful study of the words has not changed my opinion. In some places where the rune þ (thorn) is used, it is not used properly. But I shall not enter into details at this time.

That the Norwegians discovered Vinland is a fact. That they, in the fourteenth century, may have penetrated into the country as far as the present Kensington, is possible. But what has been testified to about the finding of the stone is not convincing, and I do not consider the Kensington stone authentic.

It seems to me that the stone should be brought to Norway to be examined by expert runologists, and, in my opinion, nothing else will dispose of the matter.

Yours respectfully,

• GISLE BOTHNE.

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## APPENDIX.

## PROFESSOR FLOM'S INVESTIGATION.

Since the foregoing was written, a learned contribution has been made to the subject by an eminent philologist, Prof. George T. Flom, of the University of Illinois, who reaches an adverse decision. This was courteously furnished to the Committee in manuscript, but has since been revised and published in June, 1910, by the Illinois Historical Society, entitled, "The Kensington Rune Stone, a Modern Inscription from Douglas County, Minnesota." His objections can be classified as follows:

\*  
PRONUNCIATION AND SPELLING.

1. *hadhe*. *hafthe* should have been used: that is, the disappearance of *f* or *r* before a consonant had not yet taken place.

2. *redh* should be *ridh*. The change to *e* begins about 1400. *re*, in the third line from the end, is an attempt to use the modern Swedish-Norwegian *re*.

3. *fro* should be *fra*, as *fro* and *from* never occur in Middle Swedish.

4. *of* cannot be compared with the sense "too," which would be beside the point; and *of rest* is as impossible as "too west" in English.

5. *öh* would have been in Middle Swedish, in the regular way, *öö*.

6. *ahr*. The same error occurs here as in *öh*. These spellings belong to a much later time.

7. *dhag*, *opdhagelse*, *landh*, *dhedh*. There was no need for the Swedish scribe to employ the rune *þ* for *d*, as well as for *dh* and *th*; for *d* then had its own symbol (*ᚠ*).

## INFLEXIONS.

8. *rar, kom, fan, har.* The transference of the singular form to the plural is comparatively recent.

9. *man*, as plural, is irregular.

10. *ri hadhc.* The modern scribe here employed his own speech, with an antiquarian effort shown in introducing *h* after the dental.

11. *fra dhenō sten* should be *fra þacssom sten* (variant of *þacmma sten*): "later *fra* may also govern the accusative, which would give the form *fra þacmma sten*."

12. *at se acptir rōre skip* should be, regularly, *at se acptir rarom skipum*. The rune stone's inscription is that of present speech, Norwegian rather than Swedish, except for the word *acptir*.

13. *from dhenō öh.* *öh* is feminine in Old Swedish, and the feminine form of *dhenō* should have been used, i. e., *fra þacmma ö.* (Compare *fra dhenō sten* above.)

## MEANING OF CERTAIN WORDS.

14. *po*, then just forming from *upp a, up pa*, could not be used in this way (i. e., with an activity), but only as a preposition meaning *upon*. The use here is modern (in Swedish comparatively recent).

15. *opdhagelse* must have dated from after the Reformation. It is Dutch, and its meaning as here employed is from High German *entdecken*.

16. *laeger* is a loan from the German. The Old Swedish word was *laegher*, which also was used differently.

17. *rise* should be in Old Swedish *resa*, which came into Swedish from German in the fifteenth century.

18. Two quotations are given, from the fourteenth century and the fifteenth century, to show how consistent the language was at that time. One is from Själinne Thröst, 1370, MS. 1430, the other from Margaret's Chronicle, late fifteenth century, MS. 1514-1525.

## THE RUNES.

19. Examination shows that the runes employed are not those of the Mariaklagan, Middle Swedish of about 1400, which are the same as in the Scanian Law (1300). The Kensington scribe therefore did not use the regular Norwegian and Middle Swedish runic alphabet, but employed characters either invented by himself or from some other dialect, "a different alphabet."

20. This paper shows use and knowledge of runes "until the last century." Hence there is some likelihood of someone having skill enough to write runes in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

21. It finds that the particular alphabet of the Kensington stone was in use in the sixteenth century in Elfdalen; and it infers that the sixteenth century is "modern," yet in important respects quite different. For instance, the thorn, þ, was used by the Kensington scribe for *th*, *dh*, and *d*, whereas at the date claimed for the stone *d* had its own character, ḁ. He must therefore either have been ignorant of ḁ, or, in modern style, used þ for *d*.

## DISCUSSION OF THESE OBJECTIONS.

Most of these critical objections have been presented by others, and are referred to in the body of the foregoing report. There are 21 items, as numbered, and they will be reviewed here in numerical order. Numbers 1, 3, 7, 8, 10, 14, 15, and 16, have been shown to be either invalid or at least of questionable character adverse to the record.

No. 2. *re* is undoubtedly the phonetic for *redh*, which is spelled in full (*redh*) in the fourth line, but probably pronounced as spelled here (*re*). If the rune scribe were perpetrating a fraudulent record of 1362, and was acquainted with the word *redh*, he would scarcely introduce a modern spelling of that word (*re*).

No. 4. The translation *far to the westward* is not required. The use of *of* for *af* is an instance of the phonetic confounding of *a*, *aa*, with *o*.

No. 5. *öh*. The difference in sound between this word and *öö* was so slight that the rune scribe was phonetically at liberty to use either.

No. 6. *ahr*. Dahlerup says that "as early as in Old Danish [1050-1350], the original long *a* had begun to approach the sound of *aa*" (Det Danske Sprogs Historie, p. 31). This increased length of sound was indicated also by the spelling *ahr*.

No. 9. *man*. The common form for the plural was *menn*, or *män*. The form here used is irregular for any date and can hardly be justified, although in Gamle Eriks Krönike (1320) is the expression "10,000 man them forslo" (Klemming's edition, 326).

No. 10. *ri hadhe*. If the faker scribe knew the antiquarian style, it is hard to explain why he used his own speech at all. (Compare No. 2.)

No. 11. *fra dheno sten*. The error of not distinguishing the gender of nouns in the application of the demonstratives was, and is, common. The final letter (*o*) was frequently substituted for *a*; but as *sten* is masculine, this form of the adjective is quite allowable. The final letter *o*, being unaccented, was frequently substituted for *a*, and *vice versa*.

No. 12. *at se äptir vore skip*. This illustrates the confusion of inflexional usage of the fourteenth century. According to Falk and Torp, about this period *e* was changed to *ä* in the word *eptir* and others in the Swedish language; but the change was not permanent, the letter *e* being restored, and a century later we find *äptir*, *eptir*, and *äffthir*, and *eftir*, used side by side (Svenska Medeltidens, Rim-Krönikor, third part). As the scribe employed *äptir*, it seems that, unless he was a learned linguist, he must have been contemporary with this temporary change.

Professor Flom contends that a writer of the fourteenth century would have written *varom skipum*. We find however that case endings were not so invariably respected as is commonly supposed. Even in the Icelandic sagas, which show a far more precise literary practice than the Swedish of the fourteenth century, the case endings are sometimes violated. For instance, in the Vinland saga (A. M. 552) we read: "*Lata*

*their i haf fram tvennum skipum thegar their eru bunir*'' (Vigfusson's Grammar, p. 123, line 23). *haf* is there nominative and should be dative, while *tvennum skipum* is dative and should be accusative.

Such disregard and confusion of case endings is still more common in the Swedish of the fourteenth century. Molbech says of this period: "The old mother tongue's declensions and endings, which in the fourteenth century but meagerly remained, almost completely disappeared at the close of the century'' (Molbech's *Ordbog*, p. xlvii). We find therefore that the expression in the inscription is not out of harmony with fourteenth century usage.

No. 13. This shows the same irregularity of declension as we find above to be characteristic of the period.

No. 17. *risc*. Kalkar gives this spelling as an Old Swedish noun (meaning journey) of the middle ages. The modern form, *reise* or *reysa*, occurs more commonly in the literature of that period.

No. 18. These quotations from the standard literature exhibit the usage of scholars, among whom there was great dissimilarity of standards. The Kensington stone shows rather the usage of the common people, and, as already stated, the two cannot be expected to agree in detail.

No. 19. The runes used are not precisely like those common in 1362, as illustrated by the Mariaklagan and the Seanian Law, these being of about that date, but embrace novel characters, thirteen in number (including punctuations). It cannot be understood why an unlettered Swede of the nineteenth century, attempting a fraud of 1362, should invent, or import, thirteen characters not in common use; since this variation from the common use would hardly be expected to further the acceptance of the fraud. The proper comparison would be with other inscriptions of West Gothland, which the two runic documents referred to are not.

No. 20. It is certainly true that a scant and waning knowledge of runes continued till the nineteenth century.

No. 21. This particular alphabet, according to Professor Flom, appears to have been in use in the sixteenth century in



Elfdalen, in central Sweden, though with some divergences. How much earlier it was used, we do not know; but as people from Gothland ("8 Goths") were of this party and also used this alphabet, it is evident that it was used in Gothland or West Gothland.

This energetic discussion brings out important new facts which every one who is seeking only the truth will welcome; but every one will be at liberty still to make such application of the facts as his own judgment dictates. There are curious anomalies in the arguments of the author, such that the facts presented seem not to be used in their logical sequence, nor in the bearing which they have on each other and on the main issue.

The rune character þ (thorn) is confounded by Flom with a similar character having the upper and lower ends of its semicircle continued somewhat to the left of the vertical bar. This form is said to have taken the place, in part, of þ in the modern Dalecarlian runic alphabet, when, on the disappearance of the sounds *dh* and *th*, a special character was required to represent the sound of *d*, which grew into prominence and persisted. The character thus used does not appear on the Kensington stone, but þ only; and hence only the sounds that þ represented can be fairly ascribed to the stone. Professor Flom's new transcription, on pages 25-26 of his address, seems to be based wholly on his confusion of these rune forms. In 1362 the thorn (þ) must also have represented the sound of *d* in those cases where the *d* sound in spoken language had supplanted *dh* or *th*, though it had not yet been given a special character in written language. The modern runic alphabet, according to Flom, employs only the new form which represents the sound *d*.

On the stone the rune þ occurs fourteen times, distinctly cut, without any suggestion of the modern rune character representing *d*. Yet notwithstanding this the author assumes that the scribe, a man of the latter half of the nineteenth century, as he supposes, and hence familiar with that modern rune for the sound of *d*, ignorantly inscribed þ (the thorn) in these fourteen places. It is not intimated that the use of the

old character was due to the scribe's cleverness, to make the inscription seem ancient, although that would be a consistent view for Professor Flom to take, but he says distinctly that the scribe was ignorant of the character used for *d*. As a matter of fact, the modern sound of *d* was only beginning to be used in spoken language in 1362, and was very rarely recognized then in runic script by  $\text{ᚩ}$ , the character for *t* punctuated and thus changed to indicate the *d* sound.

Professor Flom shows that a rune system was used in Dalarne in the sixteenth century and later (page 24), but fails to show how much earlier. Doubtless runes were well known there in 1362, since their use seems to have prevailed throughout Scandinavia from a much earlier time. To except Dalarne would be without reason, unless some special conditions can be shown to have operated against runes in that district. The inference therefore is that they were the ancestors of the Dalarne system of 1600. It remains to ascertain how the ancient runes used there differed from those of 1600 or those of more recent time, and whether they manifested those characters that do not agree with the modern Dalarne system, nor exactly with that of the Scanian Law. Finding important divergences of the Kensington stone from modern runes, Flom abruptly attributes them sometimes to the ingenuity and sometimes to the ignorance of the scribe, not even considering the possibility of their being due to their archaic date.

It is unlikely that a faker with the keenness necessary to guide him in injecting into the inscription certain ancient forms of language should so far forget himself as to leave off the old inflections of the verbs (*om*, *um*, etc), thus giving his work a decidedly modern look. It is more probable that in 1362 those endings had already been dropped in speech, but that a skillful impostor, familiar with ancient literature, would retain them in his inscription.

The conclusions of the appendix (page 43) seem not to be based on the facts brought out by Professor Flom's address. No. 1 is deficient because his address does not treat of "the language as spoken at the time." He only discusses it as written and especially its inflexions, which were dropped much

later in the written than in the spoken language. No. 2 is faulty, for he does not at all discuss "the runic series of the time" (1362). He finds that the Kensington inscription agrees substantially with the recent Dalecarlian system, and where it shows discrepancies (which may arise from greater age) he regards them as evidences of forgery by the scribe. No. 2 is further faulty because of the uncertain significance of the word "modern." Some things that are modern, say of the nineteenth century, began to exist in the fourteenth, but are still "modern," which indeed may be the case of the Dalecarlian rune system as a whole. The verdict of the committee who reviewed Flom's arguments, being founded on evidence not proven, or only assumed, is therefore not conclusive.

The genuineness of the Kensington rune stone must be determined, if Professor Flom's identifications be accepted, by an investigation directed to the question whether the Dalecarlian system of runes existed at the date 1362; for the linguistic objections are largely swept away, and the runic objections appear to be turned into probable evidence in favor of the stone.

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#### INVESTIGATION OF THE RUMOR RELATING TO SVEN FOGELBLAD.

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The following article, reporting an investigation of an alleged forgery of the Kensington Rune Stone, contributed by Mr. H. R. Holand, is reprinted from the Minneapolis Journal, in which it was published August 9, 1910.

Since the famous rune stone of 1362 was found near Kensington, Minn., twelve years ago, it has been subject to a close scrutiny, and many persons have been accused of having forged it. These have, however, been acquitted one after another until now only one remains. This man is one Fogelblad, who was formerly a Swedish Lutheran pastor.

According to the statements of Professors R. B. Anderson and G. T. Flom, the leaders of the opposition against the genuineness of the inscription, Fogelblad was a Lutheran clergyman who later was deposed. He is said to have turned against his former faith and written books

against Christianity, among which was one entitled "Age of Reason." He made his home at Kensington, where he is reported to have carved runes on window casings and doors, etc. One of his favorite subjects of discourse was a strange narrative of how "Scandinavian explorers had visited that region (around Kensington) hundreds of years ago." When he suddenly died, "Fryxell's famous book on the Runes of East Gothland" was found in his trunk. This book was later given by one Andrew Anderson, in whose home Fogelblad died, to Olof Ohman, the finder of the stone. According to Flom and R. B. Anderson this book is a complete commentary on the inscription of the stone.

Such is the rumor published in several newspapers, and now latest in a pamphlet published by the Illinois State Historical Society. It must be admitted that, if this is true, it is serious circumstantial evidence against the truth of the inscription.

Although I have made four or five earlier trips to Kensington and vicinity, I had not heard this rumor, and I have therefore just made a special trip thither to see what could be learned of this man's life and character.

I have spent a week in following the trail through Douglas, Grant, Pope, Meeker and Carver counties. I have talked with persons who knew him in Sweden, with farmers who entertained him for years, with men and women whose entire schooling has been received from him, and, finally, with those who were with him when he died. Although I have interviewed more than a hundred persons, there has been perfect harmony in all their accounts, especially concerning his character.

The following is a summary:

Sven Fogelblad was born about 1820-25 in Sweden. He studied theology and the necessary classic studies that went with it in Upsala. His first public appearance is some time before 1860 when we find him as a jolly curate under Rev. Mr. Rolander in Tomberg parish in Westgothland.

He resigned his pastorate and came to America. Here he was almost persuaded to re-enter the ministry as pastor of a Swedish congregation at Litchfield. But at the critical time his old enemy, drink, tripped him up.

He made his first appearance around Kensington about 1885-90. He is described as a short, thickset man of about 70 years of age, always cheerful and neat. He must have overcome his drink habit, for none of the people around Hoffman and Kensington ever saw him drink or under the influence of drink. He had no permanent home here, but as itinerant schoolmaster used to sojourn for a few weeks at different farmhouses, getting 50 cents per month for each child taught. His classes used to number six to eight pupils, giving him an income of \$3 to \$4 per month, which was all he needed for clothes. When the

times and the seasons were inconvenient for schooling he used to quarter himself upon a farmer. He was extremely lazy, and was never known to have assisted in the harvest or carried in a pail of water or an armful of wood. He preferred to repair old pipes, bind books, make kitchen knick knacks, etc.

In spite of his laziness the farmers were always glad to see him because of his wealth of local news. He knew of births and deaths and other doings far and wide, and was the forerunner of the village newspaper. Moreover he was always absolutely reliable in all his gossip, conscientious and kindhearted in all his narratives, and clean and agreeable in person. He was without any ambition and never studied. He wrote neither books nor pamphlets, his literary efforts consisting of humble doggerels, which rarely if ever were printed. He, however, boasted to several that upon one illustrious occasion long ago in Sweden he had written an article for which a paper had paid him ten kroner (about \$2.50).

Although he always seemed contented, there was an undercurrent of melancholy in him, and those who know him best say he was never happy after he left college. Those days evoked his liveliest memories, and his eyes always overflowed with tears when he told of the times when he with 300 or 400 other students used to sing the stirring Swedish songs. On the whole, he appears to have been a tenderhearted, superficial person in general, with a deep conscientiousness which prevented him from squaring his creed with the doctrine of the church, wearing his sorrows as well as his joys upon his sleeve, inspiring confidence in all by his openhearted ways.

He had been visiting for a year with a nephew in Scott county, when he in 1895 returned to Kensington to visit friends. On approaching the house of one Andrew Anderson, he suddenly felt ill, whereupon he went in there and died after a three days' attack of an unknown malady.

Those who knew him best in Grant and Douglas counties are Messrs. Oslund, Thompson and Simonson of Red Rock Lake, Hendrickson of Hoffman, Ekberg of Herman, and Moen, Carlson, Benson, Ohman and Oberg of Kensington, all among the most respected farmers of that section. To these persons and many others I put the following questions:

Did you ever see or hear of Fogelblad making runes on window casings, doors, or elsewhere? Did he ever speak of American discovery, or of Scandinavians having visited this section long ago? Do you believe he could have had a hand in making the Kensington inscription?

To all of these questions I received an invariable and unequivocal "no." Not one had seen him make runes, not one had heard him speak of Scandinavian explorers in Minnesota, not one believed he could possibly have had anything to do with the Kensington stone. Many of



these persons doubted the stone's genuineness, but, no matter who had chiseled it, they said, they were sure Fogelblad was innocent. He was, they said, too honest and conscientious to have perpetrated such a fraud; he had no aptitude whatever for practical jokes and deceptions; he was too lazy to have executed it, and too garrulous to have concealed it if he had. Furthermore, it is plain from the limitations of his early training and later opportunities that he was entirely ignorant of the fine runological and linguistic points involved in this inscription. Finally, he did not make his appearance around Kensington until many years after the tree above the stone had wound its roots around it.

As to "Fryxell's famous book on the Runes of East Gothland," which, according to Professors Flom and Anderson, contains all the material for this inscription, I assert Fogelblad never possessed or saw this book, for one excellent reason—such a book never existed except in the overwrought minds of these gentlemen of imaginary rune lore. Fryxell never wrote any book whatsoever on runes. For information on this, see every Swedish encyclopedia. The only nut of truth in this entire bag of husks is that Andrew Anderson, in whose house Fogelblad died, found an old Swedish grammar (by Almquist) among his books. On page 34 are two lines of runes to illustrate the development of the language. This book he gave to Olof Ohman, the finder of the stone, who by its help tried to make out the inscriptions, but without success. Three years ago I looked over Ohman's books in his absence and found this work, but saw at once that it had nothing to do with the inscription, as the runes are different. Last spring this book was again brought into the discussion by suspicious persons, and I then asked Professor Winchell, the state archaeologist, to send for the book, which he did. He then laid it before Norse scholars, who said it would be quite impossible to have constructed the inscription from this alphabet.

The small collection of books left by Mr. Sven Fogelblad at his death, at the home of Mr. Andrew Anderson, was found, on inquiry by the Museum Committee, to have been disposed of in part to Rev. M. A. Nordstroem, of Riverside, California. In order to push the investigation of this question still further, inquiry was made of Mr. Nordstroem as to the existence of any works on runes, and especially by Fryxell on runes, in the collection owned by Fogelblad. Mr. Nordstroem replied, after some delay due to change of residence, that the books got by him were on philosophy, that Fogelblad had no work by Fryxell, and added that, in his opinion, Fogelblad could not have made the inscription.



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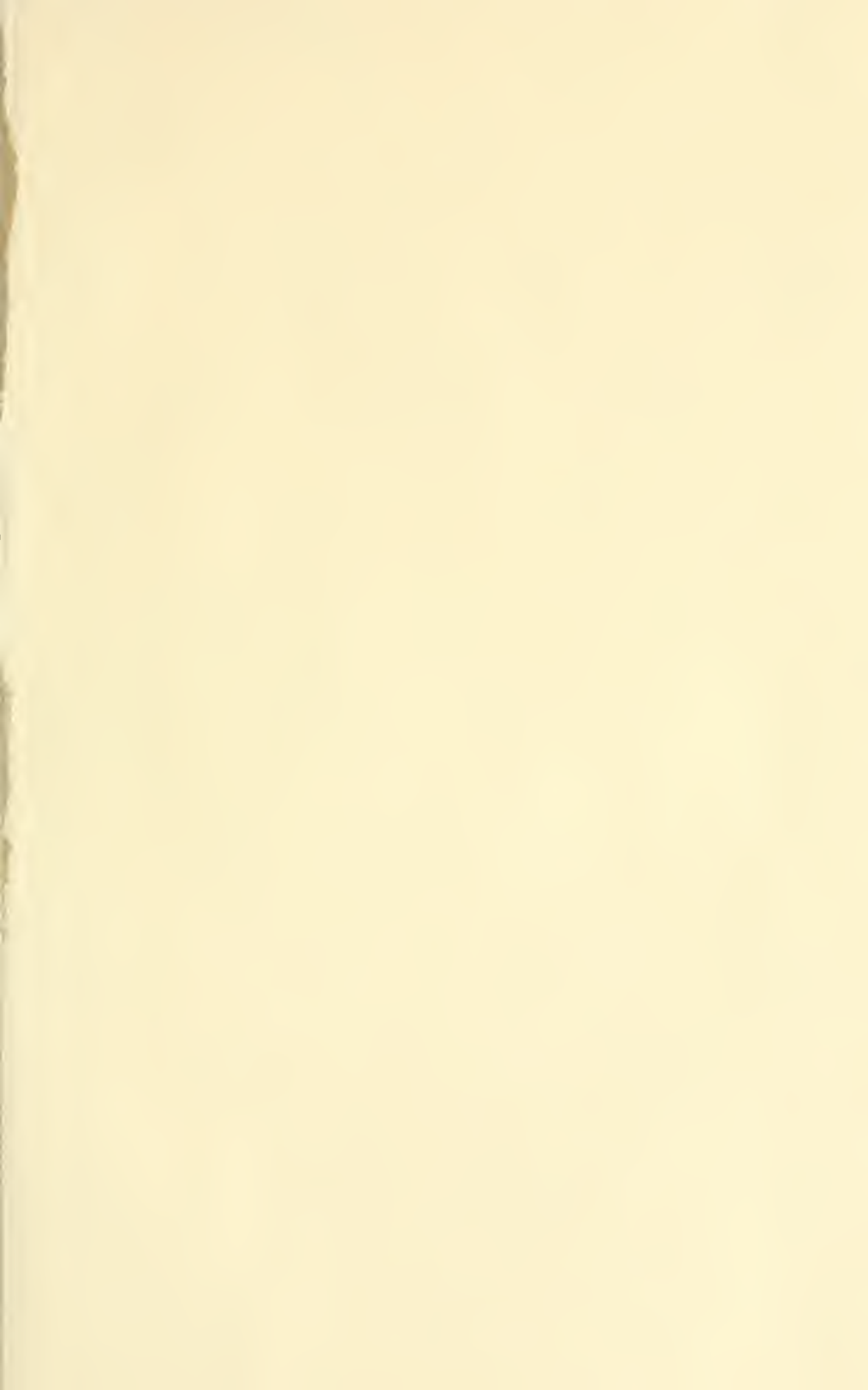


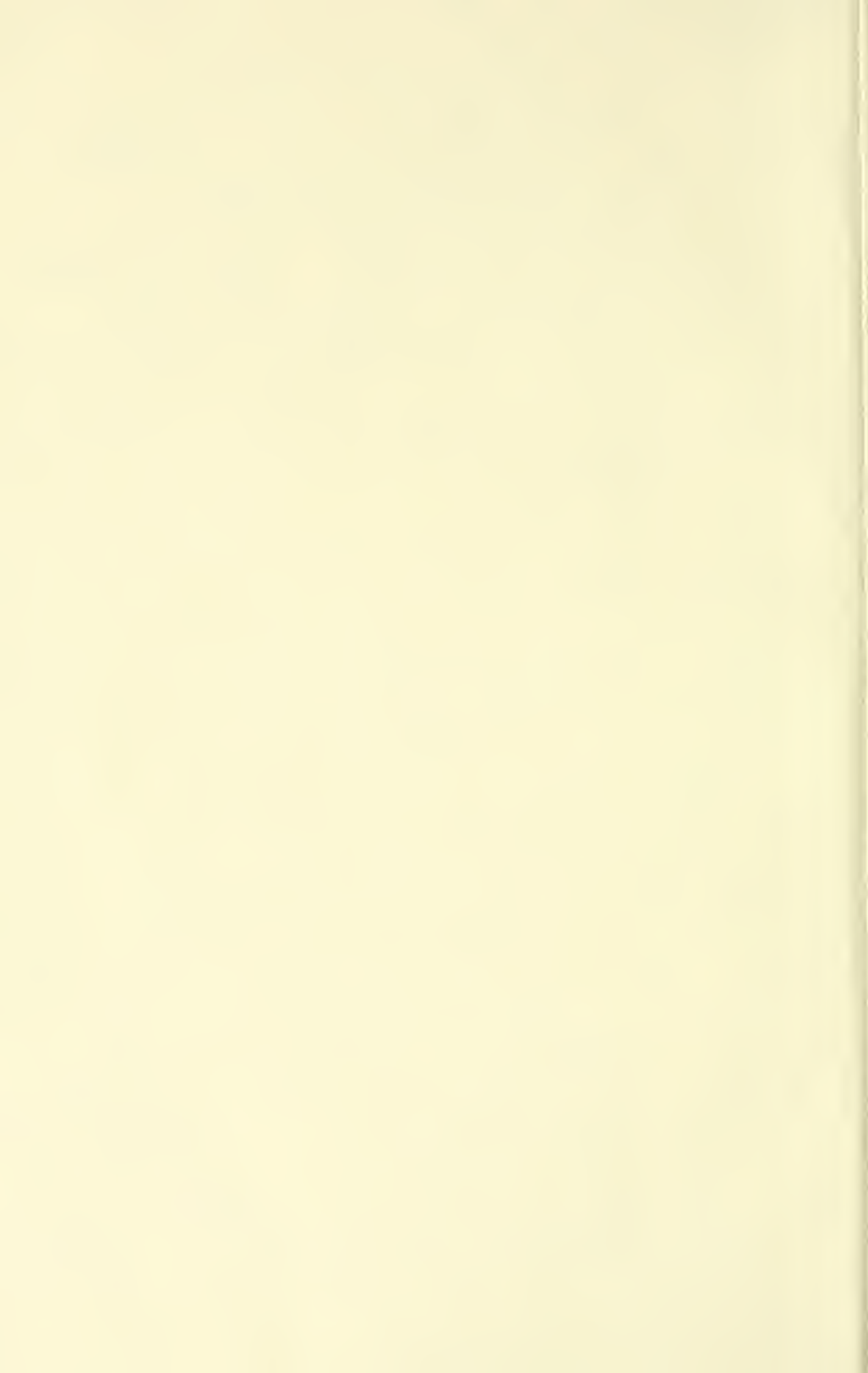






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